

TWENTY-THREE SERMONS,

ON THE FOLLOWING

INTERESTING SUBJECTS:

On the Being of a God.	On obtaining God's Favour.
On the physical Operations of the Universe.	On immoderate Love of Pleasure.
On Obedience in our Stations.	Necessity of a moral Life.
On Contentment.	On the Solar System.
On having an Interest in God.	On God's Omnipotence.
The Wonders of Nature considered.	On the Fall of Man.
On God's Omnipresence.	On Christmas Day.
Necessity of Dependence on God.	On Good Friday.
The fatal Effects of Pleasure.	On Easter Day.
The Force of evil Habits.	On Ascension Day.
Advantages of a religious Life.	and
	On Whitsunday.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

On the Security which Religion affords to the State,

A SERMON,

PREACHED ON THE FAST DAYS OF 1793, 1795, 1796 & 1797;

From Exodus v. 2.

BY THE REV. J. MALHAM,

AUTHOR OF

*Two Sermons on National Gratitude—Dictionary of Common Prayer—
Infant Baptism defended, &c. &c. &c.*

THE THIRD EDITION, CORRECTED.

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1799.

SECRET



INTEREST

On the 1st of July 1864
the following list of names
was received from the
Department of the Navy
for the purpose of being
added to the list of names
of the crew of the
USS "Albatross" which
was ordered to be
fitted out for service
on the 1st of July 1864
and to be ready for
departure on the 15th
of the same month.

A STERMON

BY THE REV. J. M. BARNES

THE REV. J. M. BARNES

VOL. I.

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PREFACE

To the THIRD EDITION.

IT is usual for authors to address their readers on any new publication, and to prefix some account of their motives, or of the subjects they have treated, with a view to recommend them to public attention. On topics which are not commonly considered, this is the more necessary and important, as the generality of readers are seldom prepared to form such a judgment of them as they may be entitled to; not so much from any defect of abilities, as from being unaccustomed to reason thereupon, and consequently less competent, without such aid, to deduce, from a general view, those conclusions which the author primarily designed.

A 2

Or

OF the character of the first edition of these sermons, besides the respectable mention made of them by the different censors of literary productions, the author might add the sanction of many respectable letters, which he has received from various gentlemen, most of whom are scarcely known to him, and some only from their public character.

FROM the respectable list of subscribers herewith presented, some farther ground of judgment may also be collected of the personal respect and generous support, which the author, in consequence of these sermons, has experienced; as he can pledge himself that nearly all the names which are prefixed to this edition, as encouragers of the work, were actually subscribers on his own personal knowledge, and that very few of the names of those purchasers, whom he did not himself supply with copies, have come to his hands. Had he been favoured with these, his list would have been more respectable in number,

PREFACE.

ber, though, probably, not in dignity; and, in its present state, it is certainly far from inconsiderable.

He was prevailed upon, in the second edition, though scarcely twelve months had elapsed from its first appearance, to give a shade of alteration in the title; wherein he submitted to the opinion of some friends, in whose discerning judgment he has the highest confidence. But, for such a measure, the motives assigned are of so flattering a nature, that it would be an injustice to himself to conceal them.—The prevailing opinion of the peculiarly good tendency of his sermons, and of the propriety of a more general title, as the means of making them more fully known, preponderated to induce him to acquiesce with the pressing recommendation of his friends to that purpose. He had the less hesitation in doing this, from the consideration, that whatever argument may reach the seaman (for whose improvement

provement the sermons were originally written, and to whom several of them were preached) must also have a striking effect upon every other individual, in a similar condition of parentage, education, and the like circumstances. Hence the propriety of bringing them forward, in a way which had the greatest probability of affecting such individuals, in manufacturing or other laborious employments, was then submitted to, and is now acknowledged by the author; and as he submitted the second edition, in such a state, to the well-disposed reader, he has no less reason to hope, that his readers must be satisfied with this simple and plain narrative of the success of his publication, in bringing forward this third edition.

IT should farther be considered, that the arguments peculiarly applicable to the seaman, afford, with little more than a change of words, when duly and maturely weighed, additional proofs of the

the Being, Superintendence, Foreknowledge, and many of the incommunicable Attributes of the Almighty; and, therefore, increase the mass of evidence in support of the fundamental truths of religion, on which our whole trust and confidence can alone be securely placed. Hence these sermons may merit the attention of the scientific divine and systematic student, as well as of the practical and less-learned individual; and it is humbly hoped that, for these reasons, all degrees and ranks of persons may deduce some benefit and advantage from them.

THE six additional sermons on the fundamental points of the christian religion are peculiarly adapted to this purpose; and have been received with distinguished approbation. To the second edition was first added, a sermon preached on the preceding fast day* to

* April 19th, 1793.—This has been since given, with a very little variation, to other assemblies on the several fast days of 1795, 1796, and 1797.

two country congregations, of which they expressed the most cordial satisfaction; it was afterwards introduced into this volume, at the request of many who heard it, as the author declined at that time to publish it singly, though repeatedly solicited, amongst the multitude of discourses which were every where brought forward on that occasion.

Salisbury, Dec. 1798.



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THE
CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

Arguments from Nature for the Being of a God.

PSALM lviii. 10. *Doubtless there is a God that judgeth
the earth.* Page 1

SERMON II.

On the Nature of God's moral Government, applied
to Men.

PSALM lviii. 10. *Doubtless there is a God that judgeth
the earth.* 17

SERMON III.

The great Utility and Advantages of Obedience
considered.

HEBREWS xiii. 17. *Obey them that have the
over you, and submit yourselves.*

S E R M O N I V.

The happy Fruits and Benefits of cultivating a Disposition of Contentment.

HEBREWS xiii. 5. *Be content with such things as you have.* Page 51

S E R M O N V.

The great Importance of obtaining an Interest in God.

1 TIMOTHY vi. 12. *Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life.* 65

S E R M O N VI.

The Wonders of Nature considered.

PSALM cvii. 24. *These men see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep.* 83

S E R M O N VII.

The great and important Doctrine of God's Omnipresence exemplified.

PSALM cxxxix. 8, 9. *If I take the wings of the morning, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.* 99

S E R M O N VIII.

Arguments for the Propriety of Dependence on God.

PSALM lxxvii. 19. *Thy way is in the sea, and thy paths in the great waters; and thy footsteps are not known.* 117

SERMON IX.

Cautions against the immoderate and inordinate Love
of Pleasure.

JEREMIAH xliii. 23. *Can the Ethiopian change his
skin, and the leopard his spots? then may ye do good
that are accustomed to do evil.* Page 133

SERMON X.

The very great Danger of indulging, and the Dif-
ficulty of subduing and conquering evil Habits.

JEREMIAH xliii. 23. *Can the Ethiopian change his
skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye do good
that are accustomed to do evil.* 151

SERMON XI.

The important Advantages of a religious Life con-
sidered.

1 TIMOTHY iv. 8. *Godliness is profitable unto all
things; having the promise of the life that now is,
and of that which is to come.* 169

SERMON XII.

Peculiar Advantages of obtaining the Favour of God
considered and applied.

1 SAMUEL xx. 3. *There is but a step between me
and death.* 187

S E R M O N XIII.

The Danger of indulging in licentious and sensual Pleasures.

2 TIMOTHY iii. 4. *Lovers of Pleasures more than lovers of God.* 203

S E R M O N XIV.

The immoral Lives of Men, not from a want of Means of knowing better, but a want of Disposition.

2 COR. iv. 3. *If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.* Page 223

S E R M O N XV.

The Operations of natural Causes, and the Wonders of the Solar System displayed.

PSALM viii. 3. *For I will consider thy heavens, even the works of thy fingers; the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained.* 241

S E R M O N XVI.

Political Reflections on some providential Occurrences in History, with practical Inferences.

PSALM cxlviii. 8. *Wind and storm fulfilling his word.* 261

S E R M O N XVII.

The natural Effects of Adam's Transgression, and the Manner in which it affected his Posterity.

ROMANS v. 12. *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men: for all have sinned.* 285

S E R M O N XVIII.

The Appearance of our Lord in the Fulness of Time
considered and applied.

GAL. iv. 4. 5. *But when the fulness of time was come,
God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under
the law, to redeem them that were under the law,
that we might receive the adoption of sons.* Page 305

S E R M O N XIX.

Sacrifices and Offerings of no Avail without the pro-
per Fruits of moral Obedience; with the Efficacy
of Christ's Sacrifice for Mankind.

HEBREWS x. 5. *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst
not; but a body hast thou prepared me.* 325

S E R M O N XX.

The Resurrection of Christ, an irresistible Argument
of the Redemption obtained by his Death.

ROMANS viii. 34. *It is Christ that died; yea, rather,
that is risen again.* 353

S E R M O N XXI.

Reflections upon our Saviour's triumphant Ascension
into Heaven.

LUKE xxiv. 51. *And it came to pass, while he blessed
them, he was parted from them, and carried up into
heaven.* 371

S E R M O N XXII.

On the Promise of the Holy Ghost, under the Name
of the Comforter, with its Accomplishment and
Effects.

LUKE xxiv. 49. *Behold, I send the promise of my
father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem
until ye be endued with power from on high.* Page 389

S E R M O N XXIII.

On the Security which Religion affords to the State.

EXODUS v. 2. *And Pharaoh said, who is the Lord,
that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know
not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.* 415



SERMONS

ON VARIOUS

INTERESTING SUBJECTS.

SERMON I.

On the Being of a God.

PSALM LVIII. 10.

DOUBTLESS THERE IS A GOD THAT JUDGETH
THE EARTH.

IN the course of sermons I propose to deliver to you, I cannot better execute my design, than by introducing the subject with endeavouring to establish the important doctrine of the text.

To the generality, perhaps, of my present audience, it may be peculiarly advantageous to secure this ground, as a basis whereon to found our future arguments on the various topics we shall have

B

to

to consider. For it would be to little purpose to recommend and enforce the duties of life, in a religious view and upon religious considerations, without first demonstrating the existence of God, on which the original necessity of practising these duties depends. This indeed is the foundation of all religion; and if this foundation is not properly laid down, the superstructure will be weak, and insufficient to obtain any of the objects for which it is intended.

BUT it may not be improper to press to your more immediate attention, the importance of the subjects proposed to be treated; and also to premise some observations, respecting the manner in which such discourses should be handled. For it must not be considered, that I am simply speaking to an assembly of Christians, such as are usually met with in country parish churches; the discourses which I now propose to lay before you must be ranked under another
and



and a very different class, and are to be regarded peculiarly as they tend to affect the general character of such congregations as THIS which I am now addressing.

It is far from my intention to give any reasonable cause or ground of offence to any of my present audience ; though I find it incumbent upon me to observe, that I shall be obliged to express myself with unusual plainness. I am sensible that many are here assembled (which must and ever will be the case on board all ships of war) who have not had their minds over-stocked with religious principles, in their infancy ; and perhaps it may be added, with equal reason, that as little attention has been paid to this matter in the more advanced stages of youth or manhood. Various causes must occur to the reflecting mind to support the propriety of these observations ; amongst which we may consider as some of the principal, — the ignorance and poverty of parents, — want of opportunities for religious instruction, or indeed for any kind of instruc-

tion,—the influence of evil conversation and bad example. In these, perhaps, or the like unhappy condition, many of you to whom I am now speaking, may unhappily have been induced to persevere; and from the same, or causes of a nature, nearly similar, may unthinkingly have continued in the courses you have begun.

BE it my endeavour, on the several occasions which shall be afforded me, as it is MY duty, and the duty of every Christian Minister, appointed occasionally or constantly to preach on board ships of war, to remove this veil of ignorance and folly, which has so long overshadowed, and perhaps still continues to overshadow many of your minds.

To many of you, I have no doubt that this expression will expose me to the imputation of enthusiasm and bigotry; but this is very far from my intention, as nothing is more contrary to my real design than to encourage or countenance the least
en-

enthusiasm, according to the usual acceptance of the word. Yet I hope to deliver myself, in these very weighty and important discourses, with such a becoming fervour and energy, as the nature of the subjects to be treated may and will very reasonably justify.

It is highly essential to the duty of a Christian Minister, in whatever situation he may be placed, to weigh with seriousness and deliberation the prevailing disposition and reigning temper of his congregation. If he does not consult the character and conduct of his people, and from thence form a lesson of instruction to himself in the discharge of his duty; he will never have any true grounds of consolation, or be able to form any satisfactory conclusion that his conduct is approved of God. To the various descriptions of the persons I am now addressing, it is expedient and even necessary to advance many arguments, which to assemblies of persons of a different class, united together for re-

ligious worship, would have very little propriety.

HENCE it is, that in the prosecution of this design, I shall sometimes take occasion, to introduce certain phrases and expressions, more immediately adapted to strike your attention effectually as seamen.--- Sometimes I shall address you in a figurative language, in order to display, in more animated terms, the importance of the subjects treated. Sometimes indeed it will be extremely difficult to engage the attention; and then it may be necessary to exert every power of oratory, and to try the effects of corrosive and stimulating medicines;—for nothing less than a severe electric shock, and that will not always succeed, can make any impression on the minds of such persons to incline them to their duty. But such expedients may sometimes be productive of advantage, though they should always be regulated by a very powerful restraining force; yet, if I should see reason, in the progress of these discourses,

courses, to bring them forward, I am induced to hope that an anxious concern for your welfare will abundantly shelter me from the danger of incurring your just displeasure.

IN this entrance upon our subject, I will not, however, pass over a description of persons, which probably may be found in all Christian assemblies, such as the present. Amongst such a body of men, collected from every part of the three kingdoms, and very commonly from countries still more remote, I have great reason to suppose there may be some, whose education and instruction may have been more liberal. To you, therefore, I will particularly observe, that many of the good impressions which probably then were made on your minds have been since defaced, either through the influence of evil example and bad company, or an indulgence of untoward and vicious principles and dispositions. If in this congregation, there are any persons of this description who now hear me ; let

me indulge the flattering and pleasing hope of being enabled, by the help and blessing of my great Master, to rouse you, whoever you are, to a sense of your duty, and at least to induce you to reflect so much upon your state, as to consider the rank you possess in the scale of creation. From such a soil, though it may be overrun with weeds and rubbish, with briars and thorns,—there may be inferred the strongest grounds to expect the effects of cultivation; and when the face has once been cleared, the greatest hopes may be entertained, that a goodly and profitable harvest will thence ensue,

It is of peculiar importance to all persons to consider the nature of the expression contained in the text,—“Doubtless there is a God.” I will not suppose that I have here to do with Atheists, who actually disbelieve the Being of God; for such are really, if they at all exist, of a much smaller number than may frequently be supposed. But for a seaman
to

to be an Atheist, is such a prodigy as all nature cannot afford an instance of. The man who has been inured to traverse the fathomless abyfs, to explore the imperceptible tracks of the ocean, and to behold the frequent and wonderful acts of Providence in the watery elements, far removed from all human sight; to HIM the existence of a God must be familiar, from an unavoidable attention to his works. The Presence of an Almighty must be every where conspicuous; and the works of nature loudly proclaim to the seafaring man, that even when he* “is in the uttermost parts of the sea,” the “hand” of God “leadeth” and conducteth him. It would be an insult to common sense to suppose, that a seaman can possibly think at all, and not believe that there is a God; for † “they that go down “to the sea in ships, and occupy their “business in great waters, these men

* Psalm cxxxix. 9, 10. † Psalm cvii. 23, 24.

“ see the works of the Lord, and his
“ wonders in the deep.”

OTHER occasions will be afforded me of speaking on the wonderful order and regularity of the tides ; and the vast benefit and advantage which the mariner derives from a thorough knowledge of the compass. I shall therefore pass over these matters at present, — with this single observation, That they all proclaim the existence of an Almighty Creator and Governor ; by whom, as this visible world and all the other sublunary works of nature, were at first formed, and disposed in a regular and established order, — so they are still preserved by his supporting power, and the smallest deviation from the primitive and settled laws of nature cannot take place without his Almighty fiat.

As the seaman, therefore, if he thinks at all, must be particularly acquainted with all these things ; it does not
seem

seem so necessary to prove to him metaphysically (or by express enquiry into the nature and attributes of God) that there is a God,—as to press and enforce the great importance of cultivating those principles of knowledge, which are so fully demonstrated to his senses, that he cannot shake them off. For a God he DOES, and MUST, and ever WILL, acknowledge. Though his thoughts, whilst on shore, may be unsettled and wavering, there are seasons and circumstances during his various passages through the ocean, which in a very peculiar manner demonstrate this truth.

BUT it is not sufficient that you simply acknowledge your belief of a God ; for I have observed, that the proofs of this come home to your senses in so striking a view, that you cannot withhold your assent. Such consent, as being constrained, can therefore afford very little ground for merit, and can scarce be admitted as any plea in your favour.

Yet

Yet I must here caution you against the danger of mistake; for this is the basis and foundation of all religion, which you never must nor can forsake, and by this chain all nature is linked together. It is the improvement which such a reflection, and such a belief, must suggest as necessary and essential, which I wish to press to your notice and consideration. For if God made the world in the beginning of time, and still, after so many thousand years, continues to preserve it?—if the various creatures, in their several stations, continue to act, according to their first and settled laws of government?—and if man, as at the head of this creation, still proceeds, through successive generations, to preserve his rank and dignity therein?—it must certainly be incumbent on every one, according to the station of life he is placed in, or the capacity in which he is respectively engaged, to fulfil the duties required of him in such station and capacity,

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THE being of a God must be farther evident and demonstrable to the seaman, from other reasons which are common with the rest of mankind. For whether he inhabits on the land, or navigates the ocean, he cannot be insensible to the regular and orderly course of nature; in the rising and setting of the sun, in the different changes and appearances, and in the certain and invariable * course and motion of the stars. The spring, the summer, the autumn, and the winter, constantly succeed to each other in a known revolution, by the apparent change and position of the sun; and the months in

* I am not here speaking the language of an astronomer, but a dialect more suitable to the common apprehensions of mankind. The fixed stars, usually so called, are not so absolutely fixed in the great expanse to a certain point, as not to vary from it; but this variation is small and regular, and in common speech the character of *fixed*, in comparison with the planets and other orbs, may be applied with sufficient propriety.

like

like manner observe their established and stated periods, from those immutable laws which have been given to the moon by the Author of all nature. To these the seaman, whether his natural faculties have been cultivated or not, cannot be insensible. However absurdly gross and sensual his ideas in other respects may be, he will always be compelled (if you can so far secure his attention as to obtain a serious answer from him) to acknowledge the propriety of an unseen power to govern the world. He must perceive that these splendid orbs of light, which, for various purposes of Providence, and for the use and accommodation of mankind, are situated in the immense space of matter, could not receive such an unchangeable disposition from any accidental causes; and he must be convinced that they could not have continued, through so many successive ages, to act with the same exact order and regularity, without the direction of a superior power. So that, upon all these accounts, it must be acknowledged,

as

as an undoubted truth, what the psalmist
hath observed in the words of the text
— that without all doubt “ there is a
“ God.”

S E R M O N II.

On God's moral Government.

PSALM LVIII. 10.

DOUBTLESS THERE IS A GOD THAT JUDG-
ETH THE EARTH.

THE very great importance of considering and establishing our faith and hope on a solid foundation, must certainly be obvious to the least degree of reflection. If the springs of our actions are not duly tempered, we can have no reason to expect that the machine should move with regularity and uniformity. It therefore concerns us very nearly to examine, upon what motives our proceedings are grounded, and by what compass we steer in the great ocean of life.

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ON a former occasion I have declared to you the objects more immediately to be attended to in the course of Sermons, which I design to lay before you. The magnitude of those objects must be acknowledged by all who are pleased to consider them with the least attention. Nor must we pay a less regard to the manner than to the matter of our discourses to an audience such as the present ; as the peculiar subjects, which the plan I have sketched out will unavoidably lead me to treat of, must evidently point out the expediency of a mode, and the necessity of a management, very different from what is usual in the progress of a business of such infinite importance.

LEAVING to those, who may be more inclined to indulge in speculation, the proofs of a God upon metaphysical principles, I have pointed out the reasons, by another species of argument, which dispose men in general to the moral necessity of admitting the existence and superintending

tending power of an Almighty. Respecting the temper and capacity of the greater part of those whom I then addressed, I conceived it to be of more essential service to pursue these topics on such grounds, as could not be contradicted or withstood. For arguments which are taken from obvious facts, such as present themselves to our senses, must force conviction on every honest mind; and they need no other aids but those which common sense afford, to enable men to judge of what they are thus presented with. Hence it is, that the method I have adopted in these discourses is so peculiarly suited to the character and faculties of those, for whose service and advantage they are designed.

HAVING, therefore, demonstrated in the manner I have related, that "there is a God;" I proceed on the present occasion to consider the remaining part of the text, and to view him "as a God that judgeth the earth." This is one of his most essential attributes; with the exer-

cise of which no reasons whatever can induce him to dispense. It arises naturally from a consideration of his preserving and upholding power; and it is necessary for the honour and credit of those laws, which he has impressed upon matter, according to its various relations and circumstances, that they should be observed, and to maintain the dignity and authority of the law-giver. Of this observance, therefore, he must take cognizance; and as these laws have continued the same for near six thousand years, from the very formation of the world, the same measures and rules of judging will consequently be attended to in this respect with all. Their invariable and immutable continuance proves beyond a doubt their permanent and durable character; that they are founded in the most consummate wisdom, and established on unerring and unchangeable principles. They prove and demonstrate the foreknowledge of the Creator, as well as his omniscience; and shew that he is confined
by

by no limits, but those of the strictest veracity and justice.

It is in preserving and maintaining the observance of those original laws of matter, that a very considerable part of the exercise of his providential power consists. And this influence must, in a very particular degree, extend itself to man, for whom the Almighty has been pleased to prescribe rules for his conduct in life. Nor is any thing more obvious to a person of the smallest observation, than that the various animals and fowls upon the land, and the various monsters and fishes in the sea, all act alike, in their respective conditions, according to their nature; and at present follow those plain and simple dictates of nature, according to the primitive law and order, impressed respectively upon each of the creatures at the beginning.

Is man inattentive to these examples of obedience in the brute creation? is

he regardless of the steady conformity of inanimate matter to the rules prescribed to it, and to the disposition it originally received when the world was first made and fashioned? such a person, whatever station of life he may possess, is worse than those very brutes, which he probably treats with disdain and contempt, and debases himself beneath the very refuse and rubbish which he thoughtlessly tramples under his feet. It is man, who boasts himself as the head of the creation, and endued with reason and understanding; it is man who is created in the image of God, whose existence I have proved to you from obvious considerations; he it is who degrades that nature, and abuses that freedom of will, which has been given him, to the sordid purposes of sensuality:—he it is who “wallows in the mire,” like the most stupid of all brutes, with which we are familiarly acquainted, as if he despised the dignity of his nature

nature and the bounty of his creator;

It need scarcely be intimated that these remarks are peculiarly applicable to a great number of my present audience. To many seamen, it must be observed with concern and regret, that such observations are directed with peculiar force. The dignity of human nature is a topic, which perhaps they have scarcely heard of, much less considered; and if any of this description are now before me, to whom all means of improving your natural faculties in infancy have been denied, I have no hesitation in declaring to you, that your condition of mind is truly to be pitied. To many of you, who have been in the habit of despising your rank in the creation, it must not be dissembled that a less favourable sentence is declared; and as you have been entrusted with talents of a magnitude awfully important, your abuse of them will assuredly be enquired into

hereafter, when you are called to give an *
 “account of all the things done in the
 the body.” For as “there is a God,”
 which created all things, and gave to every
 part of matter invariable laws and precepts
 for its government and disposition; so he
 will one day † “judge the earth in righ-
 teousness and equity,” and strictly exa-
 mine whether every part of creation has
 acted to its original appointment.

To that established and approved maxim,
 that *pity is but cold comfort to persons
 in distress, without actual relief*, you
 will all be ready and eager to assent. You
 are probably convinced from sensible ex-
 perience, that the wants and distresses
 which many of you or your families may
 labour under, have great need of some
 friendly assistance. You may perhaps have
 been led to express an uneasiness, that you
 cannot so fully accomplish your aim, as
 you would wish; and to hope that the re-

* 2 Cor. v. 10.

† Psalm xcvi. 9.

presentation of your condition will excite the attention of some well-disposed mind to succour and relieve you. For I speak not now of any of those hardships, which are inseparable from your situation as seamen, and in which both officers and men are equally concerned; neither do I allude to such as may have been occasioned by your own thoughtlessness and dissipation, since your connexion on board a ship of war; but I am inclined to regard those only, whose distress may appear to have a better foundation, and to arise from causes of a less criminal tendency.

BUT I wish at this time to address you as men of common honesty and integrity, who have a real design to perform faithfully every serious engagement you have made. I wish to consider you as men, who are desirous of paying and discharging all proper and just claims; and at no time to abuse the trust and confidence which have been reposed in you. For surely you must be convinced of the obligations which those
lay

lay you under, who have held out to you the means of subsistence in the hour of distress, and perhaps preserved many of your families from starving in the day of their necessity. Happy would it be for society, and for public credit, if all who now hear me were of this disposition ! For however desirable pity may be, it is the beneficent hand which administers to your friendly and seasonable aid that you will ever be anxious to secure ; and one of these without the other is, I will not say, barely useless and unprofitable, but a mockery and insult over your misery and wretchedness. *

“ If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food ; and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed, and be ye filled ; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body ; what doth it profit ? ”

HENCE I mean not simply to tell you, that your condition of mind is to be pitied ;

* James ii. 15, 16.

but

but I design to press to your notice and attention the consideration of such truths, as will be the means, if you are not greatly wanting to yourselves, to relieve you from it. The physician does not content himself barely to describe the malady and disorder of his patient ; but he proceeds, according to his skill and judgment, to prescribe such remedies as are likely to remove it, and restore him to health and vigour. Equally necessary it is for the minister of God to become the faithful physician to the souls of those, for whose service he has been more immediately appointed, and whose office it is to lead men to happiness. Nor must he content himself with a bare discovery of the general disposition of those he is placed over ; he must also consider what medicines are suitable to correct the acrimony and virulence of the complaint. He must consult, as does the able physician of the body, what prejudices and prepossessions his patient has entertained ; and accordingly adapt the form and manner of
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28 *On God's moral Government.*

the composition to the particular cases for which it is intended.

THE consideration which the text supplies, that "there is a God," is a very important one. To the seaman I have shewn that it is peculiarly so. He has proofs, I will not say, superior to the person who is constantly upon land; but he has proofs in greater number, of a kind which the rational mind cannot withstand. I have also observed, that this God is under a moral necessity of "judging the earth;" and of requiring an account of all our actions, according to our respective situations in life, and in proportion to the faculties with which we are endued. It is a maxim, equally true in religion as in reason, that * "where much is given, much will be required;" but that it shall on all occasions † "be accepted, according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not."

* Luke xii. 48.

† 2 Cor. viii. 12.

SUPPOSING, then, that your faculties have not been cultivated and improved, but that either the poverty of your parents or friends, * or want of opportunities to obtain instruction, has prevented all accession of power or ability to your natural and primitive capacity ;—supposing that many of you have been left to the rude state of nature, and perhaps, which is far worse, exposed to the influence of evil example from those, whose duty should have obliged them to a very different conduct. This, it is certain, is the sad case of many, who are to be found, when arrived to the state of manhood, on board ships of war. Indulge me, therefore, with the liberty of addressing such a description of men, in a language

* These arguments are expressly designed to comprehend the state of many of the peasants in IRELAND, from whence many of our seamen are collected. They are equally applicable to all who have been brought up in the same state of ignorance and wretchedness, in every other part of the world ; and in these introductory discourses to seamen, the attention I have paid to this circumstance will be allowed to possess a peculiar propriety.

as nearly approaching to the awfulness of the subject, as I am able.

FROM what I have already advanced it is plain that no considering person can disbelieve the existence and being of a God. It is from a want of consideration, that the fruits which seem to be the natural produce of unbelief are so evident; it is from an imperfection in belief, and not from actual disbelief, that the seaman in general is induced to live so irregularly; it is from a habit of ignorance, and a conduct naturally proceeding from such habit, that he acts unconcernedly and unthinkingly, as * “without God in the world.” I will not,—I cannot persuade myself into the opinion, that any seaman can deliberately declare, with the fool, of whom the psalmist speaks, that † “there is no God.” It is an assertion, which every day's experience must contradict. It is an assertion, which the whole face of creation unanimously con-

* Eph. ii. 12.

† Psalm xiv. 1.—liii. 1.

demns;

demns ; what the seaman, in particular, has so many reasons to condemn, that he must be mad who can assent to it.

THE doctrine of the text, then, that "there is a God, who judgeth the earth," is firmly established. You must believe it ; it is not in your power to refrain from believing it. In the contrary idea, there is something so shocking to human nature, that its simple voice, untutored by art, uncorrupted by habit and bad example, and unprejudiced by sophistry and fraud, spurns at and recoils against. The poetical description of Dr. YOUNG * to this purpose, is inimitable ; but to most of my hearers it would have an appearance of pedantry and parade to recite it. Abounding with noble thoughts, and fraught with arguments sublime and insurmountable, it sets at a distance all opposition ; conviction forces its way into the mind, and takes a permanent

* On the Being of a God.—The quotation at large is in Enfield's Speaker, p. 134, 135.

32 *On God's moral Government.*

possession of the soul ; and it declares in terms unerring and unequivocal, that “doubtless there is a God which judgeth the earth.”

S E R M O N III.

On the Importance of Obedience.

HEB. XIII. 17.

OBEY THEM THAT HAVE THE RULE OVER
YOU, AND SUBMIT YOURSELVES.

OBEDIENCE and submission keep equal pace with the necessity and extent of all rule and government, in every state and society. This is a truth, which the common experience and observation of mankind must forcibly compel every one to assent to.

WHAT that particular kind of obedience is, to which the text more immediately pointed when it was first delivered, is not necessary for me to enlarge upon at present.

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34 *On the Importance of Obedience.*

It will be fully sufficient to observe on this occasion, that whether it be considered generally of all submission, authorised by the rules of society, or in a more limited sense for that branch of it alluded to by the apostle, it is equally true and equally binding.

THE present assembly, which I have now the satisfaction of addressing, differs in a very essential manner from the general complexion of assemblies on shore. A ship's company is a little community within itself, though collectively obedient to the government it belongs to. In this, as in all other communities or corporations, some are appointed to command and govern, and others to obey. The principal officer may be considered as the vicegerent or president of the whole state, and the subordinate and inferior officers as the magistrates or servants more immediately authorised to observe the execution of his will, in their respective capacities. I could offer to you a farther suggestion,
and

On the Importance of Obedience. 35

and consider the minister of such an assembly in a very conspicuous and important view ; I could point out advantages, which such a body of men, as I am now speaking to, might receive from this appointment. But at present I shall restrain this effusion of my mind, and check the desire of expatiating on the benefits, which ministers of credit and ability may confer on board ships of war ; nor shall I enlarge at present, in that full and extensive manner which the subject admits of, on the utility and importance of such an office. For my situation here is merely of an occasional and temporary nature ; and I cannot even hope to go through a system or chain of discourses, in a way peculiar to the profession and occupation of seamen. But I wish to embrace the very few opportunities which may probably be afforded me, to speak to these subjects ; and I trust, that the important truths I have to deliver will be regarded with a more than common attention.

36 *On the Importance of Obedience.*

NOTWITHSTANDING the very different situations and conditions of the several members of this community, it must not be dissembled that the cause in which you are embarked is the same, and for the same purposes. Difference of rank and station, which is necessary in all societies, alters not your relative situation, with respect to the supreme government of the kingdom. The same providential hand too will be extended to the meanest seaman here assembled, as to the first officer in the service; and you will all be equally the objects of the Divine Goodness and Mercy, if you only take care to render yourselves worthy of such kindness.

RELIGION has ever been found, in all kingdoms and empires, of essential service to the due observance of its laws; and obedience to government, and to the civil statutes of our excellent constitution, has been greatly promoted by its aid and assistance. And the laws of any little community, such as the present, will either
be

On the Importance of Obedience. 37

be observed with reluctance or with pleasure, as the heart and affections are engaged by religion, or on the contrary, have not received the impression of its influence. Peace and good order are far better secured by a principle of religion, which sanctions those laws; than by any base and servile principle of fear, where the heart has not imbibed the necessity of obedience from religious considerations.

EVEN on this confined ground, which I have taken to speak to this audience, on the relative duties of its respective members, I am sensible that many difficulties are to be combated, many prejudices to be overcome, many obstacles to be surmounted. Thus much, however, I may venture to assert,—That if obedience and submission are best secured by principles of religion in a kingdom or empire, it will be equally advantageous in such a community as the present.

38 *On the Importance of Obedience,*

UNACQUAINTED with the laws and statutes, provided by the legislature, for the regulation and good order of such communities, I can only say from report, that they have generally been termed severe. There can be no doubt, that, like all other laws which are provided for general benefit, they HAVE been and WILL be productive of particular hardships and inconveniences; and it is much to be lamented, that occasions should ever have been given for the necessity of them, or that the degeneracy of human nature should be such, as to render the continuance of such laws necessary. Yet, if men would once suffer themselves to be influenced by a spirit of religion, which obviously tends to convince them of the advantage of discharging their duty, from the true principle and wish of doing it; these hardships would scarcely be felt, and these severe laws might be rendered a dead letter, as unnecessary to be regarded. For we are informed, from a great Authority
that

On the Importance of Obedience. 39

that, * “ rulers are not a terror to good
“ works, but to the evil ;” that they sel-
dom disturb the obedient and dutiful, but
only the turbulent and unruly.

DESIROUS of interesting every one here
present, I have great reason to wish that
every one of you † will sit down with a
silent attention to what I shall deliver.
For in such a community, collected as
it is from so many different quarters,
various dispositions and sentiments must
prevail. On this remark, I shall only
observe in a general view what is the
duty of a minister, as it appears to me,

* Rom. xiii. 3.

† Those who are acquainted with the nature, and
mode of performing the public service on board ships
of war, must know that this position must have been
to many utterly impossible ; but considered figuratively,
as intending to produce a solemn stillness, the direc-
tion was never more strictly attended to, even in the
best regulated parish churches, than it was at the
time of delivery on board. A testimony of such a
nature on such an opportunity offering, should not be
withheld.

40 *On the Importance of Obedience.*

on board a ship of war ; that the timid should be soothed and comforted with wholesome counsel, the careless excited to the necessity of obeying the commands of their superiors, and the disobedient and refractory goaded and stimulated by placing before them in battle array, * “ the terrors of the Lord.” This, indeed, is the duty of a Christian minister, in a suitable degree, to assemblies on shore ; but I cannot help supposing, that the original appointment of ministers to ships of war must have proceeded from a motive which suggested the great utility and advantage of their office, seriously and conscientiously discharged, to promote good order and obedience in the community.

THE superiors in this assembly will, I trust, excuse me, if in some respects I should refer to the duties more immediately relating to their rank and station here. But I mean not hereby to insinuate

* 2 Cor. v. 11.

On the Importance of Obedience. 41

the smallest necessity for any change, or to intimate the least defect in the executive part of the duty in this community; for the last time* of my officiating here gave me an instance of discipline and humanity united, which, to a reflecting mind, must be highly pleasing.

SHOULD I suggest a few words on the nature of crimes in such a society, and the punishment advisable to be inflicted for them, I hope, not barely for the indulgence of the superiors, but to engage the attention of the inferiors of this assembly. It is principally of such of the laws and articles, enacted for the government of such communities, which admit of a dis-

* As the sermon then delivered does not appear in this volume, it may be proper only to say, in explanation of it, that the fact alluded to was, that of a seaman's striking a boatswain's mate with a knife; which terminated in the discharge of such seaman, on the ground of his having been formerly considered as occasionally insane, the establishment of which was equally and eagerly sought and desired by the person injured, and the commander.

cretionary

42 *On the Importance of Obedience.*

cretionary exercise of power, and not those which are declared to be of a mutinous nature, that I am led to speak. And here, it is most certainly consistent with reason and the general condition of human nature, to interpret smaller and less important offences with mildness and indulgence; for if they are committed through inadvertence or ignorance, and the example is not of a tendency remarkably evil, it is probable that a gentle reprimand would suffice. Perhaps, if through habit and custom some small crimes are committed, there it seems reasonable to hope that pertinent remonstrances would be more effectual than corporal punishments; and if the strength of such habits loses ground upon the whole, a sense of shame will often operate more forcibly to effect a reformation, than the slightest chastisement. Not that I can enumerate all the degrees of offenders against the government and discipline of such a society as this; they are as many and as various as are the dispositions of those, of which the society is compounded.

On the Importance of Obedience. 43

pounded. To notice only the hardened and abandoned violator of all discipline (the dreadful crime of mutiny excepted, which ought never to receive any indulgence, on account of its alarming tendency), — I scarcely know what to say respecting it; but I should think the proper treatment of such as these would be, first, to inflict a degree of chastisement, never extending indeed to inhuman cruelty, for the sake of example, and then, to discard and abandon them with every mark of disgrace.

It has often been suggested, and probably with some reason, as it seems agreeable to the general state of human nature; that, if corporal punishments were less frequent, and crimes inadvertently and undesignedly committed were more favourably considered, good order and obedience would be better observed than by a rigid severity. I cannot give any opinion from naval experience; but I may be allowed to observe what to me appears to be founded in common life and the reason of things.

44 *On the Importance of Obedience.*

things. And it is notorious to all, who have studied human nature, that there are some tempers which harshness and asperity only serve to harden ; and a contrary treatment is at least worth the experiment, and MAY be productive of the most salutary effects. To open and keep alive the hope and prospect of pleasing by mild and gentle usage, will often operate on many tempers ; and as these will ever be the best and most useful part of the community, they should be regarded with a favourable eye. Hence, an endeavour to gain their affections by occasional indulgence, when it can be done with propriety, merits notice,

BUT I must proceed to the seamen, and exhort you, in the words of the text, to “ obey them that have the rule over you.” And here it is, that the office of a minister to such a community becomes peculiarly important ; it is here that the directions of the minister of Christ will have a peculiar propriety and efficacy. To the refractory

On the Importance of Obedience. 45

refractory and turbulent, he must hold up the rod of spiritual correction; but to the peaceable and regular he must inculcate the blessings and advantages of good order and society.

PERHAPS there are some amongst this audience, who may be ready to say, *What do I regard the rod of spiritual correction?*—To such I will answer, That the minister of Christ is armed with a power, superior to all the destructive engines with which we are now surrounded; it is in his power, assisted by God's grace, to harrow up THY soul, * who-

* Let the reader figure to himself at this moment, that the preacher was then surrounded by the lower deck guns of a 74 gun ship; and at the same time conceive his eye directed to the bulk of the common seamen with a penetrating glow, which should seem to reach the very bottom of their hearts; and then conjecture the effects of such an expression, aided as it was, by a suitable position and agitation of the fore-finger of the right hand.

ever

46 *On the Importance of Obedience.*

ever thou art, that presumest to entertain such a thought in thy breast.

YET at present I will not enlarge upon this topic; rather let me press the remainder of this discourse to another description of my hearers; for some of you may think that you have cause of discontent with your station, either on account of its labour and fatigue, or of its discipline and rigorous exaction of obedience.

ARE there, then, any such here present, who think that your case is hard, the discipline with which you are exercised severe, or the task assigned you laborious? To you I will address myself in the words of an apostle; I will speak to you in the instructive language of *St. Paul*, *
“Wilt thou not be afraid of the power?”
Hearken to his instructions, and attend to what he will answer thee; “do that which

* Rom. xiii. 3.

On the Importance of Obedience. 47

“ is good,” says he, “ and thou shalt” undoubtedly “ have praise of the same.”

By a chearful and ready discharge of thy duty, thou wilt raise to thyself friends ; by a careful attention to the commands of thy superiors, thou wilt engage their respect ; and by a conscions execution of the trust committed to thy charge, thou wilt probably attract the notice of those whom thou hast served, and secure to thy own mind contentment and happiness, when thy own reflections will make thee as completely blessed, even in this present mortal and uncertain state, as human nature is capable of.

FOR the recollection of some of my hearers, I would wish to repeat what I have already intimated, that the articles of war, which are the laws by which communities of this sort are governed, however severe they may be thought, are not made by the superiors of such communities ; for they receive them from the legislature, and are themselves obliged
to

48 *On the Importance of Obedience.*

to conform to them in their respective stations, and must attend to such an execution and observance of them, as may insure good order and diligence in the duties of their respective stations.

To mention the honest bluntness and daring intrepidity of a British seaman, would be only to recite a common proverb. The moment of danger, to the English sailor, has long been famed as the moment of honour; who is apt to err on the contrary side, and by an impetuous ardour frequently to exceed the line of his duty. But I would wish to excite your attention to the more regular and orderly parts of your duty; I would wish to rouse you to a performance of them from a steady and determined principle of obedience. Try the experiment; and I will venture to engage, that, if this should once be engraven on your minds, your imaginary hardships would vanish into air.

You

On the Importance of Obedience. 49

You ought to consider it as an important privilege, that you are sometimes favoured with a spiritual instructor, with whom you have opportunities of joining in public worship, and of whom you may learn the blessings of a contented mind, when so many others, in similar stations of life, are deprived of them. Regarding this as a bounty from heaven, you should learn to make the greatest use of it. From hence you will be instructed in the great duties of contentment and resignation; and if this lesson of instruction does not arise out of it, you must indeed have much to answer for.

BUT let me express myself in a style and language, which I sincerely wish may prove to be true; let me * “hope better
“things of you, and things which accompany
“salvation.” Let me exhort
you to rouse yourselves as men, who have
reason for your pilot to direct the helm,
and religion for your compass to discover

* Heb. vi. 9.

50 *On the Importance of Obedience.*

your port ; so shall you steer safe through the ocean of life to your eternal haven, there to secure an everlasting rest, as through that ocean on which many of you have so often failed, till you arrive at your destination.

THIS subject I shall close, with recommending to your notice, once more, the necessity of a chearful submission and obedience to the commands of your superiors, as of the utmost importance ; “ obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account.” May you all heartily and sincerely * “ consider what has been said !” and may God Almighty bless the same for your good, and “ give you” a right “ understanding in all things !”

* Tim. ii. 7.

S E R M O N IV.

On the Advantages of Contentment.

HEB. XIII. 5.

BE CONTENT WITH SUCH THINGS AS
YOU HAVE.

PASSING on from the general duty of Obedience, to which, in a former discourse, I exhorted and earnestly desired your attention ; I now proceed to enforce the advantages of contentment in your respective stations. I have the greater reason to consider the excellence of this virtue, because it has a natural tendency and a persuasive influence to diminish the hardships of your labours, and to lessen the difficulties you may meet with.

To the greater part of this assembly, I am sensible, it is necessary to speak with unusual plainness and uncommon clearness. Hence it is, that I find it necessary sometimes to remark, that I have my eye principally upon some particular description of persons in this community; but I cannot by any means leave the rest under a possibility of mistake, as if they were to consider themselves as excluded, or unconcerned in the arguments offered. There are very few cases, unless when they are obviously and plainly pointed out beyond the possibility of error, wherein the arguments advanced to any of the seamen, will not generally extend and apply to the whole.

SUPPOSING, as I have done, that there may be a few, among this class of my hearers, who may yet be dissatisfied with your condition; I shall also admit that there may be a small number, to whom the remarks I have already made may not immediately and directly reach. Allow me then to add,
that

that I am desirous of presenting you likewise with a word of exhortation; it will not be unseasonable, and it may be productive of much service. To you, therefore, I would observe, that it behoves you to make your situation as easy and comfortable as you can, and submit to your condition. Perhaps those whom you most envy, may at this very moment more strongly labour under disappointments of a higher nature, than any to which you can possibly be exposed; perhaps if you had escaped the evils which brought you to your present situation, some greater misfortune might have befallen you. Cannot you, then, from these reflections deduce some grounds of comfort and satisfaction? Cannot you perceive that from such considerations, resignation to your lot would be less difficult? You surely may. Your accommodations and conveniences you are no strangers to; you share the common fate of your equals; and you are not exposed to any hardships, in which others bear not an equal share. Do the

paths in which you are to tread appear rugged ? By a diligent attention to your duty it is in your power to render them smoother. Do the duties of a sea-life appear irksome to you ? By a careful observance of the commands and orders, to which by your station you are necessarily subject,—you may soften the hardships of it, remove many of its greatest difficulties, and reduce your imaginary calamities within a very narrow compass.

MANY of the arguments, which I have already used in a former discourse, would have peculiar propriety in urging the great duty of contentment. Perhaps, indeed, many of you may have forgot them, if they ever made any impression on your minds ; or perhaps you totally disregarded them. There is too great reason for me to suppose either one or the other. Fickle, thoughtless, and dissipated, as many seamen usually are, it is scarcely to be expected, that such unwelcome truths should greatly affect you ; it is more than probable,

bable, that you would endeavour to efface from your minds any accidental impressions which might then have been made. On such a supposition, which matter of fact but too strongly justifies, the prospect before me, it must be acknowledged, is somewhat gloomy and forbidding.

OBSTACLES and difficulties must not, however, be suffered to impede the minister of God in the discharge of his office. Hence it is that I boldly undertake to tell you of your faults, and to* “watch over you with a godly jealousy.” Hence it is that I am desirous of rousing you to the commission of laudable and generous actions from a principle of duty and regard. I wish to secure your attention to the duties of your station on a lasting and durable foundation; and it is for this noble purpose that I have set myself to † “wrestle with you,” as Jacob with the angel, and “not to let you go until you bless me,”—

* 2 Cor. xi. 2.

† Gen. xxxii. 24, 26.

till you acknowledge me for your guardian, your protector, your friend,—and till you prove by reformation the great and important benefits you have received by those instructions I am commissioned to give you. I shall not cease, during my short ministry among you, to exercise the strongest remonstrances for your advantage, till I have obliged you to treasure up in those sacred repositories a tolerable portion of the wholesome counsels I am desirous of conveying to you. Yes, you shall bless me, by the happy fruits of your reformation. What! Do you think you are out of the reach of the Almighty because you are sailors? Do you think that you are to be excused from observing the laws of civil and religious obedience? Do you think that all your ways are not visible to Him, who is omnipresent, and that his pervading and all-seeing eye is not a witness to all your actions? For his eye can penetrate into the greatest secrets, with which your hearts may be entrusted; his eye can pierce through and remove the veil,

veil, which so strongly encompasses, and forbids all human access to them; his eye can dart through the thickest coverts, and discover the closest and most secure recesses of those otherwise inaccessible receptacles.

BUT to return to the subject of contentment and resignation to the direction of heaven. Has all I have said been insufficient to convince you of the necessity of submission to the Almighty's pleasure? Look at all nature around you, and learn obedience from created matter. Did you never make any observations, whilst on shore, of what was passing around you? Did you never observe that every part of the creation was constantly fulfilling its appointed duty? Did you never reflect when you saw the beasts and birds invariably acting according to their nature, and in exact obedience to the laws impressed upon them by their Creator? Turn your eyes to the present scene, and observe with attention, whether every thing which
passes

passes under your inspection, does not act in conformity to its settled order, and submit to the decrees of the God of nature? Are you ignorant of the nature of the tides, their orderly and regular motion, and the constant and certain direction of their course? Are you not witnesses every moment of the wonderful and powerful efficacy of the magnet or loadstone? by which, with other corresponding assistance, we are enabled to traverse the fathomless abyss to distant countries, and by which we can determine our situation and place to a degree of exactness scarcely credible. Have you not observed, both by sea and land, that the sun and moon, and stars, never deviate from their appointed course? That they constantly communicate their respective blessings for the use and benefit of mankind? And can you be insensible of these advantages? Advantages which evidently verge towards man as their center, and ultimately and naturally tend to his benefit. Has God provided all THESE advantages for us? Are
all

all THESE laws of inanimate matter, all these propensities of the brute creation, impressed upon their respective subjects for the good of man? Are each of THESE contented in their station? And do THEY so regularly and uniformly fulfil the ends and designs of their original appointment? Blush, thou man of reason;—blush at thy own ingratitude and disobedience;—blush that thou thus fallest short of the beasts and of inanimate matter, in obedience to the laws and precepts of thy Creator.

THE declaration of the scriptures respecting this submission of inanimate matter to the decrees of heaven, might have been urged as a matter of importance. I might have informed you, with the sacred penman, or rather reminded you of what you have experienced, that the very * “winds and “storms fulfil the word of God,” and act in obedience to his commands; that † “at his “word the stormy wind ariseth, and lifteth “up the waves” of the sea; that at his

* Psalm cxlviii. 8.

† Psalm cvii. 25—29.

word

word "they are carried up to the heaven," and at his word they fall "down again to the deep;" that "they reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits end." All this, and much more, as I might have demonstrated, by convincing arguments, is constantly done by the command of God; and when seamen "cry unto the Lord in their trouble," it is recorded that "he delivereth them out of their distress;" it is added, that "he maketh the storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still." Such is the declaration and experience of ancient times; and modern experience teaches exactly the same lesson. It shews us the importance of trusting in the Almighty's goodness, and of applying to him for succour in distress; and it manifests the advantages of obedience and dependance on God, and his readiness to relieve all who call upon him in time of need. I might have recited many other parts of scripture to the same purpose; but it is needless to multiply authorities. Your own reason,—that very reason which many
of

of you too often degrade and debase by the most scandalous actions, disgraceful and odious to human nature; your own reason, I repeat it, would you suffer it to be heard,—would you check the fallies of your sensual passions, and restrain those headstrong tyrants which impetuously hurry you into error,—your own reason, I say, would supply you with arguments for the pleasing effects of submission to your duty.

SHOULD I ask the discontented seaman, what is the cause of his discontent and uneasiness? I might answer for him, that the source and origin of his misconduct may be found in his own unsteadiness, or those headstrong passions which he suffers to overwhelm his reason. The past lives of many who hear me, are a sufficient demonstration of the truth and justice of the reply. I might ask, if you were more contented before you came on board a ship of war than you have been since? I might ask, if you were not then, as you are at present,

present, dissatisfied, restless, changeable, and wavering? I might ask, if any thing in the course of your lives, within the sphere of your own conduct, and within the reach of your ability, had sufficient charms to please you for any considerable time? And do you suppose, that whilst you possess the same unsteady temper, you should be ever the nearer to contentment and happiness? No. No. You deceive yourselves,—I do not say, miserably, for you were miserable before; but I say you have deceived yourselves in a way, which admits not of your shifting the scene at pleasure, and administering food to your restless mind. If you are thoughtless and discontented, do you think that the discipline and duties of a ship of war must be deranged and changed to keep pace with your dispositions? It is impossible.

TIME requires that I should check the pencil, and spare myself the trouble of finishing the portrait. I have but just drawn the outlines, and struck off a few shades to direct

direct your attention, that you may not mistake the picture. Had it been embellished with all its colourings, I fear the scene would have been too glaring. Mistake me not, my friends; if it is not the picture of many of your minds and hearts, which I have sketched, it is that of many on board ships of war. I wish not to terrify you; but I wish to rouse you to a sense of yourselves, from that sensual lethargy and stupidity, in which you have so long been involved; I wish you to see the evil of your hearts, as the greatest evil with which you can be troubled, because you are unable to shake it off by land or by sea; I wish you to perceive the value and importance of the remarks I have offered to your serious consideration.

MAY that God, who alone can controul the hearts and affections of men, effectually work upon your minds! May you be led from hence to seek after and to study contentment, in the situation which you now retain!

retain ! May you labour earnestly to reap every advantage, as opportunities permit, which your station affords you ! and may it instruct you to lead for the future, whenever you shall be discharged from hence, such holy and religious lives as may tend to the honour and glory of God, render you valuable, useful, and respectable members of society, and secure your own eternal salvation in the world to come ! May it have such a prevailing influence upon you, during your abode and continuance in this community, that you may henceforth study (not, how you shall deceive the watchful eyes of your superiors, and seek occasions of running into every species of dissipation and licentiousness,—but) how you shall best discharge your duty, promote the honour and credit of your society, emulate each other in acts of goodness, steadiness, and sobriety, and become good men and good christians on earth, to prepare yourselves for the company of the blessed saints and angels in heaven.

S E R M O N V.

On fighting the good Fight.

I TIM. VI. 12.

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH ; LAY
HOLD ON ETERNAL LIFE.

THE first words of my text naturally offer themselves to our notice, as peculiarly suitable to such an assembly as the present. In the struggles and exertions of contending nations, when powerful fleets and mighty armies are opposed to each other, the moment of victory is usually the moment of joy. When two such awful powers as these have been watching each other, and endeavouring to seize some favourable advantage or opportunity, to acquire superiority ; in the midst of their
F lamentations

66 *On fighting the good Fight.*

lamentations for the friends they have lost in the contest, (and perhaps the humane breast may reflect with pity on the characters of some of their enemies who have perished) they cannot cease from exclaiming with the apostle in his second epistle, *
“ I have fought a good fight.”

WHAT, therefore, the apostle advises *Timothy* to do in the first epistle, he tells him, and in him the whole church of Ephesus, in the second epistle, that he himself had accomplished. In the former, he exhorts them in the words of the text, to “ fight the good fight of faith,” and “ lay hold on eternal life ;” in the latter, he declares that he had himself acted according to this exhortation, and had actually “ fought the good fight,” and “ finished his course,”—that † “ henceforth there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, should give him at

* 2 Tim. iv. 7.

† Id. ver. 8.

“ the

“ the day ” of retribution, when all *
“ should receive the due reward of their
“ deeds.”

THERE are some other passages of scripture, which speak of fighting in the sense designed by the apostle in the text. St. *Paul*, in his former epistle to the *Corinthians*, in pointing out the necessity of exertion, speaks thus of himself; † “ so fight I, “ not as one that beateth the air.” Again, he thus writes to the *Hebrew converts*, ‡ “ ye endured a great fight of afflictions ;” and both these expressions are evidently figurative, and clearly similar to this of the text. Of all which the purport is, that the grand object of life is to secure and preserve such an interest in the favour and esteem of the Almighty in the present life, as shall ensure us, through the promises and mercies of God, a certain title to happiness in another.

* Luke, xxiii. 41.

† 1 Cor. ix. 26.

‡ Heb. x. 32.

68 *On fighting the good Fight.*

PERHAPS many of you, who are here assembled, might be induced on a late* occasion to enter into the public service of your country, from the hope of advantage. The prospect of foreign money and of foreign plunder, I have no doubt, were the motives by which many were then induced to enter on board ships of war ; and it is highly probable that the present audience may contain some of this description. And, when once engaged in this service, I have no hesitation in declaring a confidence that you would have acted agreeably to the known spirit of British seamen, should it

* This and the preceding sermons, which were prepared during the winter following the armament of 1790, occasioned by some improprieties in the conduct of the Spanish government and people, frequently allude to the circumstances of that period ; and it is necessary that the reader should bear this in his mind, to enable him to discover the force of the arguments. The idea of Spanish dollars, no doubt, prevailed in the minds of many on that occasion ; and British seamen were anxiously desirous of an opportunity to crush and subdue the Spanish commerce, and return home to their native country loaded with doubloons and the treasures of Mexico and Peru.

have

On fighting the good Fight. '69

have been found necessary to require your exertions against a neighbouring power. But, happily for the welfare and satisfaction of both nations, perhaps, the renewal of war was for a time * prevented; which, however glorious, must always be a very serious misfortune to the public, and to thousands of individuals.

SHOULD I proceed to some farther reflections on this subject, it will be of singular use to excite your attention to what shall be spoken hereafter in this discourse; it will prepare you to comprehend and understand what I have to offer on the words of the text, which includes a topic of a nature still more important and interesting. But in doing this, I shall wave all confide-

* The renewal of the equipment of a fleet in the spring of 1791, with the number of ships continued in commission through the winter, for the sake of giving weight to a negotiation, intended to effect a peace between Russia and Turkey; must strike the attentive reader's notice, as the object evidently referred to in this expression.

rations of a political tendency, as totally foreign to the duty of a Christian minister on board ships of war ; which I conceive should be, not to enflame the mind and aggravate the evils of public opposition, but, as far as possible, to teach the seaman of every description and denomination how to regulate his conduct, by restraining his passions and giving a check to his irregular appetites.

HENCE, then, I am to consider the seaman, whatever may be his rank and station, only as he is called upon by the government of his country, to serve it in times of necessity ; as stepping forward when his services are required, and discharging his duty to the utmost of his power in the station he possesses ; as exerting himself to vindicate the honour of his nation, and endeavouring to procure a public reparation for public injuries or insults received* ; and
regarding

* Though I have waved every consideration of a political tendency, as much as the general nature of the
the

regarding only the commission he is entrusted with, neither checking his zeal by considering the impropriety or the propriety of the appointment †, nor fearing any danger where a probable prospect of advantage or success is presented.

the subjects of these sermons will possibly permit ; it may not be improper, by way of marginal explanation, to remark, that these expressions have some reference to a political sentiment, which has lately been very predominant, *viz. that wars should not be undertaken for the sake of conquest and dominion.*

† This observation peculiarly regards those, who have it in their power to chuse or to refuse, whether they will accept any naval employment. Such, therefore, are supposed to be at liberty, if they are dissatisfied with the foundation on which any wars are undertaken, to decline the offer of their services for such purpose. But if they have once engaged in the cause, the time for retreat is past and gone ; and however disagreeable and unpleasant their situation may be, this consideration should have been well weighed before hand ; till a favourable opportunity offers to resign their employment, without any detriment to the public cause, they must discharge their duty, and cannot shrink from any acts of service, however repugnant, without rendering themselves obnoxious to an unpleasant imputation.

IF such a spirit as this should once operate upon the generality of seamen, I am persuaded the effects would be glorious to their country, and the success correspondent to their highest expectation. It would be productive of a manly and intrepid, but of a steady, cool, and well-directed courage. Its influence would be visible, through every gradation of rank in the profession; from the commander in chief of a powerful fleet to the meanest seaman. Such a principle should pervade the whole body of officers and men in the service. It should influence the admiral, who commands the whole; the vice and other admirals who command their respective divisions; the captains of individual ships in their several stations, as well as the inferior officers respectively on board every ship of war in a fleet or squadron. And against such an unanimity of sentiment, and such a zeal for the service of any country, what human power could resist? It would counterbalance many disadvantages, and give a strength and firmness, upon which no power, unless vastly superior

superior in numbers, could make any impression. In discipline, it could never exceed; and this will always be productive of very great advantages to large and hostile bodies, by land or by sea. Even the divine interposition and favour are reasonably to be hoped for, from such an union of sentiment and action.

IN like manner, the effects of discipline will be proportionably beneficial in smaller squadrons, or even in single ships. And in these respects, it will be impossible for any to "fight a good fight," where a conformity to such principle of obedience does not prevail.

BUT it is time, to use a familiar phrase, *to haul our wind, and proceed upon a different tack.* We must not rest contented with contemplating only, in a professional way, the principles and conduct which should actuate seamen; but we should also contemplate them metaphorically, and with respect to our future happiness

piness in another world. We must "fight the good fight of faith;" and seriously consider the important promises revealed as the reward of our steady obedience. We must not consider merely our present advantages and interest; but we must look forward to our future and eternal interest, and secure our happiness and felicity in another state. And here we have a very powerful host of foes to contend with; the temptations of the world from without, and our own violent and headstrong passions from within. We have to * "wrestle, not" only "against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." In "fighting the good fight," it must be done from a principle "of faith," and we must preserve a steady eye, and carefully attend to the † " recompence of reward;" for this will

* Eph. vi. 12.

† Heb. xi. 26.

support us under all our difficulties, and deliver us from the evil of all our temptations. We must do this * “in faith, “nothing wavering;” as well knowing that “he who wavereth, is like a wave “of the sea, driven” about “with every “wind, and tossed” with every rude and uncertain billow.

ONE of the greatest temptations to which seamen are peculiarly exposed from their station, is, the neglect of merit, and an inattention to exemplary obedience. I will not give offence to any one, by enlarging upon it, as not being so immediately within my province; but only observe, that whatever opposition or untoward treatment you may meet with in the present life, according to the stations in which you are placed, a due sense of the necessity of obedience will render you less unhappy under it. And if it be considered also, that this world is not always the place where merit is rewarded, it is not

* Jam. i. 6.

76 *On fighting the good Fight.*

surprizing that comparative excellence should frequently be disappointed of receiving that encouragement and support, to which it is entitled by the rules of equity. Yet there are many instances on record, where men have attained to very high rank entirely from that cause; and it is to be lamented, that such instances are not more frequent or common. But the time will come, sooner or later, when all inequalities of this sort will be rectified, and every failure remedied. There you will be sure of such a recompence, as no partiality or inattention of man can affect; a recompence, so much the more to be valued, as it exceeds any rewards of the present life in an infinite degree. There envy, calumny, prejudice, interest, can have no place; there you will be certain of receiving the due reward of your deeds, and, which is more, to enjoy it in the company of the blessed for ever. Then will the poor and harmless* Lazarus be received as a worthy companion and inhabitant into

* Luke xvi. 22, &c.

Abraham's bosom, and be happy in the society and friendship of the good and virtuous; whilst the haughty, proud, imperious, and uncharitable Dives, whatever may have been his condition in the present life, shall have his portion in the dreary and forbidding mansions of those, who are driven from the presence of God, for their disobedience to his commands.

FROM hence, therefore, it is sufficiently evident, that there are more ways of "fighting the good fight," than many of you may at first view have been disposed to consider. It is to draw your attention to this more important view of things, that I have selected this subject, and particularly the words of the text, to discourse upon at present. It was for the same purpose, and with the same design, that I expostulated with you in my last discourse, whether you could possibly 'think yourselves out of the reach of the Almighty, because you are sailors;' whether you could 'think that you are to be excused from observing the laws

78 *On fighting the good Fight.*

‘ laws of civil and religious obedience ;’
 whether you ‘ think that all your ways are
 ‘ not visible to Him, who is omnipresent,
 ‘ and that his pervading and all-seeing eye
 ‘ is not a witness to all your actions.’ It
 was to press your attention to these serious
 and awful truths, that I then added this
 consideration ; that ‘ his eye can penetrate
 ‘ into the greatest secrets, with which your
 ‘ hearts may be entrusted.’ From these
 motives it was, that I urged you to consider
 the great duty of contentment ; and from
 the same motives it is, that I still earnestly
 enforce and press your observance of the
 laws and precepts of the Almighty. For
 our Saviour himself* “ came not to destroy
 “ the law and the prophets, but to fulfil
 “ them ;” neither was he † “ the author of
 “ eternal salvation” to the careless, the
 profligate, the disobedient sinner, of what-
 ever profession or occupation in life, but
 ONLY “ to those who obey him.” It is
 evident, therefore, that every one ‡ “ who

* Matt. v. 17.

† Heb. v. 9.

‡ 2 Tím. ii. 19.

“ nameth

“ nameth the name of Christ, must depart
“ from iniquity,”—must obey his com-
mands in sincerity and truth. This only
is the way to “ lay hold on eternal life;”
for if we * “ call him, Lord, Lord,” we
must “ do the things which he says. † Not
“ every one that calleth me, Lord, Lord,
“ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven;
“ but he that doeth the will of my father
“ which is in heaven.”

It was a noble declaration of the pro-
phet; and the confidence and reliance it
places upon God, in the greatest natural
calamities, is highly worthy of our most
serious attention. ‡ “ Although the fig-tree
“ shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be
“ in the vines; though the labour of the
“ olive shall fail, and the field shall yield
“ no meat; though the flock should be cut
“ off from the fold, and there shall be no
“ herd in the stall: yet will I rejoice in
“ the Lord; I will joy in the God of my

* Luke vi. 46.

† Mat. vii. 21.

‡ Haba. iii. 17.

80 *On fighting the good Fight.*

“salvation.” Even amine upon the earth, and pestilence among the cattle, could not shake his confidence in the Almighty; but he could still * “trust in God, and commit “his way unto the Lord,” knowing that † “he who trusteth in the Lord, mercy “shall compass him about.” And ‡ “happy “is he that hath the God of Jacob for his “help, and whose hope is in the Lord his “God; which made heaven, and earth, “and the sea, and all that therein is.”

XI
NEED I offer any other arguments, to urge you to “lay hold on eternal life?” What more can be wanting, if these already declared have been attentively considered? These sufficiently prove the importance and necessity of “fighting the good fight;” these will induce you heartily and resolutely to set about it, and not to slacken in so weighty a business. If, on the contrary, all that I have said has been in vain, I am certain that more arguments would be thrown

* Psalm xxxvii. 5.

† Psalm xxxii. 10.

‡ Psalm cxlvi. 5, 6.

away;

away ; and * “ the wrath of God would be
“ treasured up against” the disobedient “ to
“ the day of wrath, and the revelation of
“ the righteous judgments of God.”

BUT, my brethren, † “ let me hope bet-
“ ter things of you, and things that accom-
“ pany salvation, though I thus speak ;”
for you may be assured, that ‡ “ God is not
“ unrighteous,” nor will he “ forget” that
“ work and labour of love, which ye” shall
at any time “ shew unto his name.” He
will reward the faithful servant, whatever
may be his station or rank in life, with a
crown of glory and eternal life ; and let me
once more press you to || “ lay up in store,”
at this present, and perhaps only, season
which may be allowed you, “ a good foun-
“ dation against the time to come,” that
so ye may all “ lay hold of” that “ eternal
“ life,” which will be the reward for your
“ fighting the good fight of Faith.”

* Rom. ii. 5.

† Heb. vi. 9.

‡ Heb. vi. 10.

|| 1 Tim. vi. 19.

S E R M O N . VI.

On the Wonders of the Deep.

PSALM CVII. 24.

THESE MEN SEE THE WORKS OF THE
LORD, AND HIS WONDERS IN THE DEEP.

THE practice of navigation is universally allowed to be of very great antiquity. If it were necessary to our main subject, it might be a matter highly gratifying to some of my hearers, to expatiate on its general history from early times. Not to mention the history of Noah's ark, which some have been pleased to consider as the first ship recorded in the annals of history, we read of Zebulun, one of the sons of Jacob, in the early state of the Jews, that in his portion of inheritance should * “ be

* Gen. xlix. 13.

“an haven of ships;”—that * “ships
 “should come from Chittim,” or the Me-
 diterranean, “and should afflict Ashur,
 “and should afflict Eber.”

WHAT we are more immediately concerned with at present, is, to consider the particular improvements and uses we can make from the circumstances of life recorded in the text, as particularly applicable to such communities as this, which I am now addressing. For THIS is the object which these discourses have had uniformly in view; THIS the end to which they are constantly and invariably directed. From the peculiar nature of the passages of scripture selected for the purpose, nothing can be more evident; all of which have a direct tendency to accomplish the plan, which for your information has been already disclosed.

FROM the words of the text, which I have read to you for the subject of this

* Num. xxiv. 24.

day's exhortation, two questions naturally and obviously offer themselves to our notice. It is natural to ask, who these men are, which are here spoken of; and what are the works and wonders which they see. The psalmist, however, has answered them fully; the verse immediately preceding the text contains the reply to the former, as those which immediately follow contain full information respecting the latter.—
“ They that go down to the sea in ships,
“ and occupy their business in great waters,
“ these” are the “ men” spoken of in the text, of whom this honourable mention is made, that they in particular “ see the
“ works of the Lord, and his wonders in
“ the deep.” It is “ in the deep” where they see those works and wonders; it is “ in the deep”, far removed from all human sight but that of their own company, where they behold those remarkable occurrences of Providence. To you, seamen, it is peculiarly given, to be witnesses of many surprizing scenes, to which others are stran-

gers, and can only * “hear of them by the “hearing of the ear.” To you it is granted to discern and to know many of the astonishing productions of nature; YOUR “eyes “see” and behold “them” in their true state of existence; YOUR eyes are spectators of those amazing discoveries in the natural world, which others are unacquainted with; and these furnish you with such extraordinary and additional proofs of the BEING OF GOD, as must force conviction upon every mind of the least consideration or reflection.

It were greatly to be desired, that seamen would really make this use of the advantages of their station; but it is too well understood that they do not. Seamen, who have so many advantages, too commonly cast them behind their backs; they seldom look beyond the outside of things which come within their observation, and this, very frequently, only in a transient and cursory way.

* Job xlii. 5.

To rouse your attention, my friends, and engage you to consider your real situation and importance in life, is a principal object which I have at heart in these discourses. It is from your advantages of seeing nature in a more extensive view, than many of your fellow-creatures, that I would at present excite your regard to return thanks to the *GOD of NATURE*. I have proved to you, on former occasions, from motives and considerations peculiar to your experience and knowledge as seamen, that there *MUST* be a God; and that this God is he who formed the world, with all the creatures it contains, and all the great and extensive system of worlds around it. And you ought to be convinced, how highly you are indebted to that God, who, by his superintending and controuling providence, directs the scenes of events, and performeth * “whatsoever he will.” You ought to remember, that he alone supports and preserves you in the midst of dangers, to which by your occupation you are peculiarly sub-

* Psalm cxv. 3.—cxxxv. 6.—Eccles. viii. 3.

ject. You ought to consider, that you have daily reason to return thanks to the Almighty for his bountiful goodness to you, and for the extraordinary beneficence which he hath extended towards you. The wonders of the deep constitute a subject, at once awful, grand, and majestic ; the consideration of them fills us with admiration ; and when man, who is regarded as the lord of the creation, and as presiding over all the creatures of this world, is compared with these, —well may we exclaim, and say, * “ Lord, “ what is man, that thou art mindful of “ him, or the son of man, that thou visitest “ him ? ”

How astonishingly serious must the reflection be, that man, so very inferior in strength and power, should thus controul the savage race by land, and the numbers of huge and enormous creatures in the seas ; that this man, by art and stratagem, should be enabled to overcome that vast superiority

* Psalm viii. 4. — Heb. ii. 6.

of bulk and strength, which many of them possess, or that sagacity and watchful principle of self-preservation which seem natural to others. I might here pertinently enlarge upon the whale fisheries of Greenland, abounding with expedients of dexterity and management surprizing and astonishing. On an element, so full of danger in itself, to be able to contend with and surpass those very serious and alarming dangers, to which seamen are subject from the very nature of that employment, which must be exercised on such expeditions, is something awfully wonderful; to subdue the vast and immense bodies, thus agitated and enraged by hostile assault, is something so far surpassing all the ideas which our ancestors could form of such amazing creatures, that they would scarce appear credible to any, but to those whose experience has rendered them familiar.

It is not improbable, that some of you, who form so considerable a part of this audience, may have been engaged in this
kind

kind of service ; and as the character given of Leviathan in the scripture, has by many been interpreted of the whale, I am induced to lay before you a part of that character, which gives us so tremendous an idea of his power and dominion. * “ Canst thou
 “ draw out Leviathan with an hook ? or his
 “ tongue with a cord, which thou lettest
 “ down ? Canst thou put an hook into his
 “ nose ? or bore his jaw through with a
 “ thorn ? By his sneezings a light doth
 “ shine, and his eyes are like the eye-lids
 “ of the morning. Out of his mouth go
 “ burning lamps, and sparks of fire leap
 “ out. Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as
 “ out of a seething-pot or caldron. His
 “ breath kindleth coals, and a flame goeth
 “ out of his mouth. The flakes of his
 “ flesh are joined together ; they are firm
 “ in themselves ; they cannot be moved.
 “ When he raiseth up himself, the mighty
 “ are afraid ; by reason of breakings they
 “ purify themselves. The sword of him

* Job xli. 1, 2, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 25, 26, 29.

“ that

“ that layeth at him cannot hold ; the spear,
“ the dart, nor the habergeon. Darts are
“ counted as stubble ; he laugheth at the
“ shaking of a spear.”

SATISFIED as I am, that this and some other parts of the description cannot, however, be true of the whale, but of the crocodile ; it gives us at least such a specimen of the “wonders” contained “in the deep,” as must, on reflection, strike us with horror. But of such prodigies, the text informs us, those men are spectators, who “ go down
“ to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters.” In the preceding chapter of Job, is also represented a description of Behemoth, or the sea-horse, which runs in very remarkable words ; and both the descriptions are given to us, as the relation of God himself, in his reply to Job,*
“ out of the whirlwind.” “ Behold now
“ Behemoth, which I made with thee ; he
“ eateth grass as an ox. Lo, now his

* Job xl. 6, 15—23.

strength

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strength

92 *On the Wonders of the Deep.*

“ strength is in his loins, and he moveth
“ his tail like a cedar. His bones are as
“ strong pieces of brass, like bars of iron.
“ He is the chief of the ways of God.
“ Surely the mountains bring him forth
“ food; where all the beasts of the field
“ play. He lieth under the shady trees, in
“ the covert of the reed, and fens. The
“ shady trees cover him with their shadow;
“ the willows of the brook compass him
“ about. Behold, he drinketh up a river,
“ and hasteth not; he trusteth that he can
“ draw up Jordan into his mouth;” or
rather, as it might be expressed, “ he is
“ in no fear even of a flood, for he trusteth
“ that he can even spout out Jordan, or
“ any other river, through his mouth !”

HERE we have another instance of wonder and surprize, which this amphibious creature, whose property it is to live sometimes on the land as well as in the water, particularly affords us; and of this can such men only be spectators, who “ go down
“ to the sea in ships, and occupy their
“ business

“business in great waters.” To seamen in particular, are such surprizing productions of nature only known; they only can describe the wonderful creatures which are found “in the deep;” and the greatest naturalists, and men of the greatest knowledge and understanding, must be contented to traverse those oceans, where these creatures are found, to obtain an accurate acquaintance with their various properties. To the man of science, and the inquisitive searcher of the works of nature (learn this, O seamen, for I speak with confidence of the Truth!)—your state, whatever you may think of it, is a state of envy, at least, of anxious desire; and, suffer me to say, could I change stations with some of those, who probably are regardless of those sources of information with which they are presented, my mind would attain to one of its highest gratifications.

SUCH are the advantages, which seamen frequently have the means of acquiring, though they so foolishly disregard, and reject

ject them. But all our pleasures and satisfaction arise from the mind; and the greater the opportunities are for obtaining knowledge, the higher delight and felicity must ensue in proportion to the mind of a person who has any desire or thirst after knowledge. As I have more than once observed, how happy might the situation of seamen be rendered, would they once learn and practise the duties of contentment and resignation? Would they only reconcile themselves to a situation, which, after all they can object, is probably the fittest and best calculated for them of all others,—they might enjoy the greatest felicity and happiness, to which, from their small and very imperfect knowledge of things, they can any way be entitled. For the horrors of a ship of war, as its hardships and unpleasant circumstances have been sometimes called, which have been painted by many in such glaring colours, would vanish before a mind thoroughly disposed to the duties of such a station; since those disagreeable occurrences are not to be attributed

buted to the condition of seamen on board ships of war as such, but to the restless and untractable spirits of many of the ship's company, for which I have already accounted.

ON some future occasions, I shall embrace the opportunity of expatiating on the means of giving some check to this evil; for a check it certainly might receive, if a proper attention should be paid to those means. What remains to be advanced on the present occasion, is to deduce some practical and seasonable observations from what has been delivered upon this subject.

HAVE we thus contemplated the wonders of the deep, in noticing some of the natural productions which it affords us; how should we be led from hence to adore the bountiful goodness of God, who has given to man such astonishing sources of opulence and accommodation in this world. For we read, that God had no sooner formed man from the dust of the ground,
and

and endued him with the faculties of reason and understanding, in which he excels all creatures whatsoever, than he promulged this law; * “Be fruitful, and multiply, “and replenish the earth, and subdue it: “and have dominion over the fish of the “sea, and over the fowl of the air, and “over every living thing that moveth “upon the earth.” And the same law was repeated † in favour of Noah and his sons, after they came out of the ark, in

* Gen. i. 28.

† Whatever effects the transgression of ADAM was productive of besides, it is evident from the comparison of these two passages, that it did not destroy that original superiority over the brute creation, which his rank in the great scale of created beings gave to man. This circumstance is peculiarly worthy of remark; and affords a striking argument against that absurd and enthusiastic deduction of doctrines and opinions, which many have inferred from the fall of man. The doctrine of original sin has been ridiculed by many, but with as little foundation as the unbounded application of it; and it behoves all persons, who are desirous of demonstrating their character as rational beings, in this as well as on other subjects, to distinguish carefully between the use and abuse of any opinions.

a lan-

a language still more exprefs; * “ And the
“ fear of you, and the dread of you, ſhall
“ be upon every beaſt of the earth, and
“ upon every fowl of the air, upon all that
“ moveth upon the earth, and upon all the
“ fiſhes of the ſea: into your hand are they
“ delivered.” It is by virtue of this al-
mighty decree, that man, though ſo vaſtly
inferior to many of the beaſts in ſtrength, is
enabled to ſubdue and overcome them; it
is this which gives efficacy to our courage,
prudence, and dexterity, in vanquiſhing the
moſt ſavage beaſts by land, and the moſt
frightful and uncommon monſters in the
ſea. This encourages and emboldens men
to undertake and purſue the moſt danger-
ous and hazardous enterprizes; flattered by
ſuch a hope and proſpect of ſucceſs, as may
perhaps be in ſome degree conſidered as an
inſtinct of nature. And this is uſually pro-
ductive of the deſired event, if common
diſcretion and caution are exerciſed in con-
junction with the neceſſary boldneſs and
reſolution.

* Gen. ix. 2.

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It

It is your province, seamen, to see the effects of those primitive laws, which give to man this power and dominion. In the whale fisheries of GREENLAND, as I have observed, the accomplishment is remarkable. And are all the creatures subject to the dexterity of man, if not to his strength, in consequence of the Almighty's command?—where is then YOUR obedience to the commands he has enjoined upon men? Are you the only creatures which are exempt from his laws? you who alone are capable of performing a reasonable service?—No. No.—Do not mistake yourselves; for * “you must” all assuredly “give account of the things done in the body;” and may God grant that in that awful day you may be able to give a good account!

* 2 Cor. v. 10.

S E R M O N VII.

X *Of God's being present every where.*

PSALM CXXXIX. 8, 9.

IF I TAKE THE WINGS OF THE MORNING,
AND REMAIN IN THE UTTERMOST PARTS
OF THE SEA; EVEN THERE ALSO SHALL
THY HAND LEAD ME, AND THY RIGHT
HAND SHALL HOLD ME.

THESE words are a part of the
Psalmist's description of the omni-
presence of the Almighty. It seems that a
calumny had been raised against him by
some of his enemies, to induce the people
to believe that he was desirous of effecting
the destruction of Saul; against which in-
justice, the declarations of the prophet are
peculiarly adapted to vindicate himself.
Against such a base and unmerited oppro-

H 2

brium,

brium, he appeals to a tribunal which could not be deceived; the watchful eye of Providence, to which the very secrets of his heart were open, could discern whether any grounds for so baneful a charge had ever existed in his mind. It was a charge inimical and dangerous, and such as in its consequences evidently tended to affect his reputation and his life; and was plainly levelled with a design to stagger the obedience of his followers, and to excite that horror and detestation, which all who were influenced by the common principles of humanity must sensibly feel.

WHETHER this psalm was wrote before or after the advantages and opportunities, which presented themselves for accomplishing the destruction of SAUL, it is not of any great importance to enquire. There are various reasons to be assigned for both opinions, with which I think it needless to trouble you. It is recorded, that at one time David * “ cut off the skirt of Saul’s

* 1 Sam. xxiv. 4, 7.

“ robe

“robe privily, but stayed his servants, and
“suffered them not to rise against Saul;”
and at another, that he * “took the spear
“and the cruse of water from Saul’s bol-
“ster, even when Abner, the captain of
“his host, with three thousand men, lay
“round about him,” but restrained his
companion Abishai from hurting his royal
person. “Destroy him not,” says David,
for “the Lord shall smite him, or his day
“shall come to die, or he shall descend
“into battle, and perish;” that is, some
disease shall overtake him and shorten his
life, or he shall die naturally of old age or
a decayed constitution, or he shall fall by
the sword of his enemies, as actually hap-
pened,—but “the Lord forbid that I should
“stretch forth mine hand against the
“Lord’s anointed; yet, I pray thee, take
“thou now the spear that is at his bolster,
“and the cruse of water, and let us go.”

BUT as this latter happened in the wil-
derness of Ziph; so the former occurrence

* 1 Sam. xxvi. 12, 7, 10, 11.

was in the cave at Engedi. On this occasion, he remonstrates with Saul, who was then come out against him with a powerful force, and cautions him to beware of ill advisers; * “wherefore hearest thou men’s words, saying, behold, David seeketh thy hurt? Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the Lord had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee, but mine eye spared thee. Moreover, see, yea see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not; know thou, and see, that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee: yet thou huntest my soul to take it. The Lord therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.”

HAVING thus stated the facts, it is obvious to infer, that such an appeal as this psalm contains, of which the words of the

* 1 Sam. xxiv. 9—12.

text are a part, must be allowed to be very natural on such an occasion. And as the words of the psalm are a paraphrase and commentary upon the concluding words of DAVID's address to SAUL, it will not, I trust, be considered as an improper use of my text, to recite the whole, so far as it relates to God's omniscience, and his competence to judge of the human heart; and to many of my present audience, for whom these discourses are peculiarly adapted, it will have a propriety, which, on this subject, seems equivalent to a necessity. For as the former was an appeal of conscious integrity to the king; this latter is an invocation to the King of Kings, the great observer of the thoughts and intentions of the heart: * "O Lord, thou hast searched
" me out, and known me: thou knowest
" my down-sitting, and mine up-rising;
" thou understandest my thoughts long
" before. Thou art about my path, and
" about my bed, and spiest out all my

* Pf. cxxxix. 1—12, 23, 24.

“ ways. For lo, there is not a word in my
“ tongue : but thou, O Lord, knowest it
“ altogether. Thou hast fashioned me be-
“ hind and before : and laid thine hand
“ upon me. Such knowledge is too won-
“ derful and excellent for me ; I cannot
“ attain unto it. Whither shall I go then
“ from thy spirit : or whither shall I go then
“ from thy pretence ? If I climb up into
“ heaven, thou art there : if I go down to
“ hell” or the grave, “ thou art there also.
“ If I take the wings of the morning, and
“ remain in the uttermost parts of the sea ;
“ even there also shall thy hand lead me,
“ and thy right hand shall hold me. If I
“ say, peradventure the darknes shall cover
“ me : then shall my night be turned to
“ day. Yea, the darknes is no darknes
“ with thee, but the night is as clear as the
“ day : the darknes and light to thee are
“ both alike.” To the same purpose he
goes on, in a language tending to establish
the innocency and goodness of his heart,
and concludes with these remarkable words :
“ Try me, O God, and seek the ground of
“ my

“ my heart : prove me and examine my
“ thoughts. Look well if there be any
“ way of wickedness in me : and lead me
“ in the way everlasting.”

AGAINST such an appeal, dictated by a mind of the most upright intentions, and conscious of its own integrity, what could the most rancorous heart reply? Addressed to men of common honesty, who admitted the natural principle of a Deity and a Providence, it must be final and conclusive. Is there any one here, who can hesitate a moment to acknowledge the omniscient eye of God? It cannot be. For as I have proved to you on former occasions, the existence of a God, and have shewn that seamen, of all persons in the world, are constrained to acknowledge it from the numerous proofs which are afforded them of this truth; the consequence follows, that this God must be present every where, and therefore possess powers of vision every where. He *MUST* be present with you, as well by sea as by land. Even in the remarkable devastation
of

of the flood, it is observed, that in one and * “ the same day were all the fountains “ of the great deep broken up, and the “ windows of heaven opened ;” to shew that they were equally at the Almighty’s disposal, to accomplish the great ends and purposes of his providence.

To such awful truths, therefore, seamen, you can have nothing to object. In words, you are not averse to admit them, if pressed to give a serious answer ; but I have great apprehensions, that HERE most of you rest, and never think farther of its important consequences. It was the conclusion of the character which St. PAUL, in writing to TITUS, gave of the *Cretians* : † “ they profess that they know God, but in works “ deny him,”—and though I would not wish to find a parallel amongst any here present to the remaining words, it may be feared that to a great many seamen, it may be applied with equal justice ; for of them, as of the *Cretians*, it may also be added, that they

* Gen. vii. 11.

† Tit. i. 16.

are “abominable and disobedient, and unto
“every good work reprobate.”

You acknowledge then, this omnipresence of God, because, as I have shewn, you cannot do otherwise. Cannot you then infer this consequence from it, that he must be a witness to all your actions? Nay farther, cannot you perceive, that, as a searcher of the thoughts and intentions of the heart, he must be acquainted with your most secret designs, however they may be concealed from the sight or knowledge of your fellow-creatures? Surely you cannot hesitate upon admitting this consequence. What, think you, was it, which moved DAVID to exclaim, that his * “Way is in the sea, “and his paths in the great waters; “and that his footsteps are not known,” neither can be traced to any certain spot or residence? What, think you, was it, which induced SOLOMON to assert, that

* Psalm lxxvii. 19.

* “ the

* “ the eyes of the Lord are in every
 “ place, beholding the evil and the good ?”
 What, think you, was it, which excited
 ISAIAH, on the distant prospect of Christ's
 kingdom, to represent the people as ex-
 pressing themselves in this pleasing lan-
 guage, † “ Come ye, and let us go up to
 “ the mountain of the Lord, to the house
 “ of the God of Jacob ; and he will teach
 “ us of his ways, and we will walk in
 “ his paths ?” but to those who forsake
 this way, the Almighty hath denounced
 judgment, not only upon themselves, but
 upon the natural produce of the earth,
 the artificial accommodations of their ha-
 bitations, their ornaments, and even their
 merchandise ; “ the day of the Lord of
 “ Hosts shall be upon the proud and lofty,
 “ and he shall be brought low ; upon
 “ the cedars of Lebanon, and upon the
 “ oaks of Bashan ; upon the mountains
 “ and hills, the high tower and the

* Prov. xv. 3. † Isa. ii. 3, 12—16.—Micah
 iv. 2.

“ fenced

“ fenced wall ; upon all the ships of
“ Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pic-
“ tures.” In every way, and by every
means, should those who forsake the
righteous laws of the Almighty be pu-
nished ; no protection should deliver the
wicked from his hand, no covert or
place of security keep them from his
discerning eye. To the same purpose
NAHUM writeth, that * “ God is jealous,
“ and the Lord revengeth ; the Lord
“ will take vengeance on his adver-
“ saries.” Though he “ is slow to anger,
“ and great in power, he will not at
“ all acquit the wicked ;” for “ his way”
is “ in the whirlwind, and in the storm,
“ and the clouds are the dust of his feet.
“ He rebuketh the sea” also, over which
he exerciseth an absolute controul, “ and
“ maketh it dry, and drieth up all the
“ river.” By all the sacred writers in-
deed, this Omniscience and Omnipre-
sence of God are declared ; the sea and

* Nahum i. 2—4.

the dry land equally contain him, and neither the heavens nor the earth can exist without him.

MAY I hope and trust, that you will not, upon the declaration of these serious and important truths, imitate the conduct of the Stoics and Epicureans, of whom St. Luke makes mention in the Acts! May I persuade myself, upon good grounds, that these do not appear as * “strange things to your ears!” Do they really seem so to any of you? let me hope, however, that in this particular, you will at least be desirous of enquiring with them, “what these things mean.” But I must at the same time caution you against following their example in other respects; and not, like those “Athenians and strangers,” to “spend your time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.” I must also press you seriously and attentively to

* Acts xvii. 20, 21.

consider, of how great importance it is, that you should diligently enquire into the meaning of what shall be delivered to you; that you may not, like those heathens, live as * “without God in the “world,” and as persons who have no knowledge of their greatest interests.

Is God then present with all your thoughts and actions?—what an awful consideration is this! To seamen, who are so grossly in the habit of disregarding this serious and momentous truth, it must indeed be an interesting subject. From the discourses which have already been delivered to this assembly, some good effects may be reasonably hoped for; and from this I would form the reviving consolation, that the condition of many who are here present may not be so bad, as it is to be feared, the state of seamen on board other ships of war, may give cause to doubt or apprehend. For it is only to a

* Eph. ii. 12.

few ships of war, of certain descriptions, to which the advantage and benefit of ministers is allowed; and much fewer, where the ministers have zeal or attention sufficient to consider the nature of their congregations, and adapt their discourses immediately with a view to the good of such an heterogeneous body of men. But from the consideration of God's omnipresence, much benefit may be produced; as it will have a prevailing influence on your lives and actions, and restrain you within those moderate limits which will be of essential service to your satisfaction and happiness here, and greatly tend to produce and secure your eternal felicity hereafter, in the blessed mansions of bliss and glory.

How ought you then to bless and
* “ praise God for his goodness,”
who has thus enabled you, by means of
this divine and spiritual assistance which

* Psalm cvii. 8.

is afforded you, to "declare the wonders
"that he doeth for the children of men!"
Is not the whole life of seamen, a state of
God's providential and interposing good-
ness in their favour? How many in-
stances of preservation have the present
age afforded us, unknown to and unheard
of in all former times? * When there
was

* The very remarkable escape of Captain INGLE-
FIELD, in the Atlantic Ocean, with a small number
of the crew of the CENTAUR man of war, which he
commanded, is worthy of record in support of our ar-
gument; who arrived safe in an open boat, after seven-
teen days sail before the wind, with many surprizing
circumstances attending it. This was the most asto-
nishing instance of escape at sea, at that time known
in the annals of history; but falls almost infinitely
short of the following more recent escape of Lieut.
Bligh, commander of the Bounty armed ship, now
Capt. Bligh, when forced into a boat, with 18 of
his ship's company, by a mutinous crew, in the great
Pacific Ocean. In such a situation, far from any land,
and that inhabited by savages; with an extremely
small quantity of provisions, and without the smallest
prospect of supply from any ship in that unfrequented
sea; he traversed an extent of sea of 3618 miles, in
the space of 43 days, without touching upon any land,

I

except

was * “but a step between them and “death;” how did the supporting and upholding power of the Almighty succour “them in their distress,” and “deliver “them from the destruction” which seemed inevitable?

LEARN then, from hence, to adore the Almighty for his mercies extended to so many of your fellow-creatures in times of the greatest distress; for God, as we have

except some inhospitable rocks on the north east coast of New Holland, where he could only obtain a very partial supply of oysters, until he arrived at the Dutch settlement of Batavia, in the island of Java, with the loss only of one man; by accident, and another who died after his arrival on shore. To these may be added, though in some respects it may differ in its nature, the still later remarkable interposition of providence in favour of the people on board the GUARDIAN man of war, Lieut. Riou, now Capt. Riou, after striking the ice, on his voyage to Botany Bay; and of his safe arrival at the Cape of Good Hope. A court martial, *pro forma*, having discharged him honourably, he is now promoted to the rank of master and commander, and gone on a similar expedition.

* 1 Sam. xx. 3.—Psal. cvii. 28—30.

seen,

seen, is "in every place," and will manifest his goodness to all those who pay him homage and respect. This will always inspire you with confidence, and give you grounds whereon to hope, that if you "cry unto the Lord in your trouble," which adverse seasons may bring upon you, "he will deliver you out of your distress. "For he" it is who "maketh the storm "to cease, so that the waves thereof are "still; and then are they glad, because "they are at rest," when "he bringeth "them unto the haven where they would "be." May God give you all an eternal haven of bliss, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord!

S E R M O N V I I I .

*The Propriety of Seamen's Dependance
on God.*

PSALM LXXVII. 19.

THY WAY IS IN THE SEA, AND THY
PATHS IN THE GREAT WATERS; AND
THY FOOTSTEPS ARE NOT KNOWN.

IT is not certain on what occasion this psalm was wrote; whether during the devastations committed by the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, or during the Babylonish captivity. But we have no need to be anxious about this matter, as it is not of importance to determine it; we know, which is sufficient fully for our purpose, that it was admitted into the Jewish canon of scripture, and set to music to be sung in

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their services. The reason of its admission, as not being come to our hands, we are unacquainted with; as it is probable that the records on that subject might be destroyed in some of those dreadful and fatal disasters and calamities which befel the Jews.

IN the former part of this psalm, the author manifests the most evident signs of distress, almost bordering upon despair. His style is that of the utmost dejection and despondence; and he seems, with much vehemence, to express his doubts, whether the Almighty had not forsaken him. But after indulging this vein of complaint, in which diffidence is so strongly characteristic, he at last rouses from his reverie, and considers it as the weakness and infirmity of human nature, which could ever admit or entertain for a moment such unworthy notions of God. Such a distrust of his providence was criminal; such want of confidence in the promises made to his people was reprehensible.

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THE deliverances which their forefathers had been blessed with, by land and by sea, were many; and he particularly instances in that miraculous preservation and deliverance of the Israelites, in passing through the Red Sea. These considerations turned the tide of his reflections, and led him to adore the wonderful interposition of the Almighty, to succour and relieve his people in their greatest calamities; for on such occasions his providence must be more sensibly felt, and consequently force conviction and an acknowledgment of his goodness. He perseveres in his declaration of God's former favours; and though he draws no positive or practical conclusion, as usual in such cases, the latter part of the psalm evidently proceeds from a restored hope and confidence in God, which are designed clearly in this song to be recommended.

To many of our present audience, it may be of singular service, to bring forward a few of the principal circumstances of the history to which the author of the psalm

alludes. By a chain of wonders, rising in magnitude and effect, as the scene of the Israelites delivery drew nearer, the Egyptians, who had hitherto kept them in bondage, and with cruel and harassing exactions oppressed them, drove them out and expelled them from their country; but not until the Almighty, who had conducted the preparatory steps of this scene, * “ had
 “ smitten all the first-born in the land of
 “ Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh
 “ that sat on his throne, unto the first-born
 “ of the captive that was in the dungeon;
 “ and all the first-born of cattle.” Neither man nor beast escaped; from the highest to the lowest every one shared in the dreadful and universal calamity. “ There was
 “ a great cry in Egypt;” and well there might, when “ there was not a house,
 “ where there was not one dead.”

ON the present occasion, I design not to enlarge so much upon the conduct of the Israelites, under those directions by which

* Exod. xii. 29, 30.

they were influenced, as upon that of the Egyptians. For the actions of the Israelites have a more peculiar relation to a different subject, which perhaps I may find cause to take notice of hereafter; but those of the Egyptians have an evident tendency to the same principles, which they formerly pursued. It appears that they very soon forgot the numerous miracles, which had evidently been performed in favour of Israel;—* “Why have we done thus, that we have “let Israel go from serving us?” Infatuated mortals! could they have occasion to ask such a question, when so many wonders and signs had been accomplished before their eyes? when they had been pestered with so many afflictions and plagues, that both animal and vegetable nature seemed to be destroyed?

BRIEFLY to recapitulate these several calamities, will be of essential advantage to many persons in this assembly. It will form a chain of history, which may probably im-

* Exod. xiv. 5.

press many of your minds, and be productive of much good. Had not the rivers of the Egyptians been turned into blood, * by the command of the Almighty, through the hand of Moses? Had not the river produced frogs in such abundance, that even Pharaoh's royal palace could not be kept clear of them? The magicians of Egypt indeed had done the same; they were permitted to add to the calamity, but they could not take it away. It was reserved to Moses and Aaron only to be the instruments for effecting such acts of mercy; counterfeit miracles had no power to remove evils.

BUT there were many others, which set defiance to the utmost power of these magicians. Could they turn † “the dust of “the land” into filthy vermin “in man “and in beast?” No. Could they send “swarms of flies,” which should even fill “the houses of the Egyptians, and the”

* Exod. vii. 20, 21.—viii. 6.

† Exod. viii. 17, 21.—ix. 3.

very "ground also?" No. Could they send a "murrain upon the cattle" to cause their death? No. They had a fine opportunity of exercising their powers if they had any. There were no "swarms of flies" in Goshen, where the Israelites were; and "of the cattle of the children of Israel" died not one. Could they effect nothing to harass these Israelites, whom they so much despised, and on whose account they now suffered so much? It is plain they could not. They were forced to confess * "the finger of God" in the miracle of the filthy vermin; and from that time they could neither imitate the miracles of Moses, nor preserve themselves from the effects of his judgments.

IN like manner also, † "ashes of the furnace" were made the means of creating a plague of boils and blains; and an extension of the "hand towards heaven" was sufficient, at God's word, to cause

* Exod. viii. 9.

† Exod. ix. 8, 22, 23.—x. 12, 14, 15; 22.—xii. 29.

"thunder

“thunder and hail, and fire mingled with
“the hail.” It was sufficient to bring a
swarm of locusts, “very grievous,” so that
“before them there were no such locusts
“as they, neither after them shall be such;
“for they covered the face of the whole
“earth, and there remained not any green
“thing, in the trees, or in the herbs of
“the field.” It was sufficient to cause
“a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt
“three days.” And, last of all, a destroy-
ing angel was sent at midnight to smite
“all the first-born in the land of Egypt;”
and then, and not till then, did Pharaoh
and his haughty court begin to discover
some use of their reason, and applied them-
selves to be rid of their dreadful enemies.

YET this was even of short duration.
No sooner had the Egyptians perceived
that the Israelites had encamped before the
temple of their God, Baalzephon, than
they concluded that their God would de-
liver these fugitives into their hand. Hence
the Almighty, who directed them to this
place

place of encampment, observes to Moses his reason for their so doing, * “ that Pharaoh
“ will say of the children of Israel, they are
“ entangled in the land, the wilderness hath
“ shut them in. And I will harden Pharaoh’s
“ heart, that he shall follow after them;
“ and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh,
“ and upon all his host; that the Egyptians
“ may know that I am the Lord.” But
how few of these pursuers escaped, to profit
by the dear-bought experience? Of all the
Egyptians, † “ all the horses and chariots
“ of Pharaoh, and his horsemen, and his
“ army, who went in after” the Israelites
“ into the midst of the sea; over all these
“ the waters returned, and covered the
“ chariots, and the horsemen, and all the
“ host of Pharaoh that came into the sea
“ after them; there remained not so much
“ as one of them,” that is, probably very
few returned to tell the melancholy tale.

To this memorable part of history does
the author of this psalm allude in the words

* Exod. xiv. 3, 4.

† Exod. xiv. 28.

of the text, and some of the verses preceding; and however, as learned men have observed, they contain a general and practical truth, to the present audience, I trust, they will be found to contain much particular and useful information. To seamen they must have peculiar propriety, who are witnesses and subjects of so many manifestations of his power and goodness.

IN this history of miracles wrought in Egypt, in order to convince them of the cruelties exercised towards the Israelites, the power of God is very eminently displayed. All nature is obedient to his mandates. The several elements are variously employed to execute the will and pleasure of the Almighty; and the nature and tendency of the miracles prove his uncontrollable omnipotence and authority. But in the waters he is particularly seen, as described by the psalmist in the verses before the text; "the waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee, and were afraid: the depths also were troubled. The clouds poured out water, the

“ the air thundered ; and thine arrows went
“ abroad. The voice of thy thunder was
“ heard round about : the lightnings shone
“ upon the ground, the earth was moved,
“ and shook withal.” And then follow the
words of the text, “ Thy way is in the sea,
“ and thy paths in the great waters ; and
“ thy footsteps are not known.” It is need-
less particularly to point out the allusion
contained in these words, to the history of
the Israelites on their departure from Egypt.

HAVING said so much to prove the truth
and omnipotence of God, even to the con-
trouling the various elements, and suspend-
ing or changing the operations of nature to
the various purposes and designs of an over-
ruling providence ; he that cannot infer
from hence the expediency and advantage
of dependance on God, must be extremely
stupid and phlegmatic, or if he does not or
will not consider what has been advanced
for his benefit, he must have much to answer
for. In former discourses I have plainly
shewn how greatly it behoves seamen in
parti-

particular to have their minds impressed with a thorough sense of this truth ; and more especially towards the conclusion of my last discourse on God's omnipresence, I observed that ' the present age has afforded ' us many instances of preservation, unknown to and unheard of in former times ; ' that the supporting and upholding power ' of the Almighty succoured them " in their " distress," and " delivered them from the " destruction" which seemed inevitable, and when " there was but a step between " them and death."

INDEED it is scarcely possible for any person to think at all of the mutability and uncertainty of human life, and not be prepossessed in favour of those very notions of trust and dependance on the Almighty, which are also revealed to us in the scriptures. For why is it, that we so readily assent to them ? Is it not because they are consonant and agreeable to our natural notions of things ? Whatever may be said of our obligations to believe the truths revealed
in

in the scriptures, on the authority of God; few, I am persuaded, will believe implicitly ALL which may be taught them under the real or pretended sanction of such an original. Nor can such a confidence be deemed rational, or consistent with the natural powers and faculties which God has given us; it can scarcely be called *faith*, but an *indolent presumption*, which the scriptures nowhere give countenance to, and which cannot therefore be requisite, or even barely admissible. For I wish you not, my friends, to believe me, only because I tell you that the scriptures declare such and such doctrines; but I appeal to your own hearts, whether they do not bear an impartial testimony to the truths I deliver for your benefit and advantage.

NOTHING can be more agreeable to our natural notions of things, than that we should first believe the Being and Existence of a God, upon rational grounds, and the relation which we stand in to him as his creatures. We should consider the laws

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and precepts he has given us for our direction and conduct in life ; how far they are adapted to our finite capacities, and whether they are consistent with the ideas we can form of his nature. For of this judgment we find ourselves capable ; as well in deducing plain notions of what God probably is, from inanimate matter, and the order and regularity of every part of the visible creation,—but more especially, by those declarations he has made of himself in the scriptures, which corroborate and confirm those notions. For every part of the creation is dependant on God, and acts by those laws which God has impressed upon it. This is that natural order of things, in which every species of matter, animate or inanimate, is exercised ; and faculties and powers have been given respectively to every part, to enable it to act according to its original intention and design. To man is given this faculty of judging, in order, as an elegant writer has observed, that he may be “ led from nature’s works to nature’s God.” In this man is superior to all the
the

the creatures around him ; and in this he is made after “ the Image of God.”

WE have seen that the Almighty manifests himself in controuling every element according to his pleasure ; and we must acknowledge with the author of the text, that his “ Way is in the sea, and his paths “ in the great waters ; and that his foot- “ steps are not known” but by the effects of his providential dispensations. You, in particular, as seamen, have the greatest reason to acknowledge this ; if you will suffer yourselves to reflect at all, you must acknowledge a God and his laws, and admit that the laws revealed in scripture are consonant to every natural idea we can form of an infinite Creator’s conduct to his creatures. What then can hinder your dependance upon this God ? what hinder your submission to those laws ? Laws, which, independent of every revealed religion, are written in your hearts ? Laws, which you cannot shake off, whatever endeavours you may exert for the purpose. Hence, then,

132 *The Propriety of Seamen's, &c.*

apply yourselves diligently, as good subjects, as honest men; as men possessed of immortal souls, capable of eternal bliss and happiness; to cultivate the natural principles impressed on your minds. Hence, then, be careful and assiduous, as you have opportunities, to confirm this happy sentiment, by application and attention, that those very principles are exactly correspondent to the declarations of scripture.

S E R M O N IX.

On the fatal Effects of Pleasure.

JER. XIII. 23.

CAN THE ETHIOPIAN CHANGE HIS SKIN,
OR THE LEOPARD HIS SPOTS ; THEN
MAY YE ALSO DO GOOD, THAT ARE
ACCUSTOMED TO DO EVIL.

IT has been remarked by almost all writers on moral or religious subjects, in all ages and countries, that habits of any kind, when closely and intimately connected with the temper and constitution of any persons, and as it were, interwoven in their frame, are with the utmost difficulty, if at all, to be corrected. And common experience, to those who pay the least attention to the affairs of life, and the conduct of mankind, evidently demonstrates the propriety of the

common proverb, that CUSTOM IS A SECOND NATURE.

CONSIDERING more particularly the prevailing disposition and temper of the audience I am now addressing, I will not spend time in pointing out the occasion of the words before us, as they related to the Jews, however properly and pertinently such a method might be exercised. Most of my hearers, though probably from very different motives, will most readily agree with me in the propriety of the omission. You will be ready to exclaim, *What have we to do with Jews?* and perhaps, not unfrequently, to add many opprobrious epithets and harsh expressions,* which is a conduct

* The common expression, *as hard-hearted as a Jew*, is known to every one. Indeed we may learn from an early prediction of their state, that they were to be distinguished from the rest of mankind in various respects; and even this of calumny and slander is not unnoticed on the occasion † “Thou shalt become an

† Deut. xxviii. 37.

“astonish-

duct extremely unjustifiable, and proceeds from an inconsiderate and mistaken notion. For whatever objections we may have to any denomination or species of people in a political or religious view, we should never be tempted to treat them offensively in a social and moral view. So long as either Jews, or any other class or description of mankind, conduct themselves properly to the government, and submissively to the laws of our country, and honestly in a commercial or mercantile way; our respect, and not our contempt, is a tribute which they have a right to demand from us. It is an injustice and insult offered to society, to treat either Jews, or any other kind of persons, merely as such, in a haughty, imperious, or disrespectful manner.

“astonishment, a proverb, and a bye-word, among
“all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.” This was one of the curses pronounced against this people, as the consequence of disobedience; but let Christians beware how they transgress the laws of equity and charity, in applying them unjustly and unmercifully, without any sufficient cause or reason for it.

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THOUGH I have thought proper to premise this observation, which I hope will not be wholly lost upon you ; I would more immediately wish to call your attention, on the present occasion, to the obstinacy of habits in general, and to those of seamen in particular. This, you must acknowledge, is a proceeding to which my duty, as your minister, more directly invites me ; and I am happy to embrace the opportunity of the invitation, that I may, in my endeavours to discharge that duty, convince you how greatly I have your interest at heart, in thus stepping aside from the usual mode of addressing such assemblies. On this subject I shall have much occasion to speak pointedly, and therefore I may be excused, if, by virtue of my office, I shall see cause to make frequent appeals to your own hearts and consciences, as the most likely and probable means of rousing you to consider seriously what shall be spoken. God grant that I may, at this time, become the happy instrument of stimulating your hopes, or alarming your fears, for your eternal good !

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THE general habits of seamen are but too well known to the attentive and reflecting mind. It sees and feels with an awful concern the infatuated condition of the far greater part of seamen. It trembles for the consequences of such a thoughtless and careless state of life as the generality of this description of people pass through. What otherwise should induce the minister of God to stand forward, to * “reprove, rebuke, “and exhort” his hearers of every denomination, and in every capacity; and to caution them against the improprieties which they may run into? What is it which persuades the faithful ambassador of heaven, when called to exercise the duties of his office on board a ship of war, to press and conjure the seamen of every station, not to give way to indulgence or excess of any kind? What, in particular, can you suppose that I have been actuated by in these discourses, to run the hazard of disobliging and displeasing the far greater part of you

* 1 Tim. iv. 2.

who

who at this time hear me? I will tell you. It is the mind within, which is constantly assuring me that it is my duty to press your attention to the truths of religion; it is the mind within, which urges to your notice the observance of such admonitions as may seem necessary and expedient for your future welfare. The conviction that I am called upon to preach the gospel to many, to whom, though born in a Christian land, and of Christian parents, the duties required by that gospel may be as much unknown, as to the wandering Arabian, or the untutored Indian; will oblige me to address you in a stile and language, to which probably you have been little accustomed. To many of you I have no doubt, that the NATURE of an almighty and all-seeing God, is scarcely known; at any rate it is little thought of. Many of you, indeed, would probably be ignorant even of the NAME, if habits of swearing and blasphemy, to which seamen, in general, are but too much addicted, did not at least serve to prevent. Shocking kind of
proof

proof this, that you are not entire strangers to the NAME of God !

HAVING sufficiently proved, on former occasions, the existence and being of God, and that there is a moral necessity for his judging the earth ; I have the less reason at this time to expatiate on that subject. This is still more obvious, if we consider the concession just now alluded to, which the very habit of swearing by the name of God so fully and amply includes. For, to swear by any thing whatever, must certainly be admitted as an acknowledgment that such thing exists ; and therefore, to swear by the name of God, is certainly to allow the being and existence of God.

BUT I have farther demonstrated, on former occasions, that this moral necessity of God's judging the earth, arises from a previous revelation of laws for the conduct of man as a moral agent.* And as man was made with
a power

* It will probably be objected by some readers, that I am hereby superseding the necessity of redemption, and
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a power and liberty of will to incline him to action, either in a manner consistent with those laws, or contrary to them ; either to chuse, or to refuse ; on his own conduct, therefore, his good or evil fate or ultimate end of his being must certainly hinge, in that great and important day of examination.

THE text is a plain intimation that there was a time, when all nature was at liberty to move and act in that regular sphere and order which God had prescribed to it ; and with respect to the natural and animal crea-

endeavouring to invalidate the efficacy of Christ's Merits, on which Christians are to build their hopes of salvation. To those who judge contractedly of things, such an opinion may easily be inferred ; but these discourses are not calculated to please men, whose prejudices and narrow sentiments lead them to estimate the condition of mankind by so diminutive a scale. The professed object of these sermons, is to consider the state and habits of the people, for whose use and advantage they are more especially intended ; and to establish the grounds of NATURAL religion, as the surest basis on which to raise the glorious superstructure of REVEALED religion.

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tion, it is sufficiently intimated, that so it still continues to be. But in the moral creation, it evidently shews that the case is altered ; and the power and influence of evil habits, by long indulgence, have given a different bias and propensity to the far greater part of mankind. “ The Ethiopian,” it is certain, cannot “ change his skin, or the leopard his spots.” This is a natural impossibility ; from which the author of the text infers and deduces a moral conclusion. When such a NATURAL impossibility can be admitted, this MORAL impossibility may also be admitted ; “ then may ye also do “ good, that are accustomed to do evil.” But it is not, therefore, absolutely impossible, that persons who have been “ accustomed to do evil,” should be induced to reform their evil habits, and afterwards gradually to become good ; yet every one’s experience, if he attends to it, must abundantly demonstrate, that it is difficult, extremely difficult ; and it is this difficulty which the doctrine of the text is plainly designed to hold out to us in this awful expression.

ILLUSTRATION of the subject will be of much greater importance to most of the members of this assembly, than a large and copious detail of argument. To refer only to any kind of pleasure whatever, which perhaps, in its own nature, may be perfectly innocent ; if that pleasure at any time is unduly increased, so as to infringe upon the necessary duties of life, the inconvenience will be long felt before the cause will be discovered. And when, through any remarkable instance, the cause of such obstacles and impediments as may thence arise has been made manifest ; what resolution does it not require to strike at the root of the growing evil ? how often will men palliate and compound for the partial continuance of a practice, which seems to them as * “ a right eye or “ a right hand ? ” what arguments will they produce for an indulgence, which is become so dear to them ? † “ Is it not a little one,” will be their favourite topic ? Surely I may be gratified in so small a matter, without offence to any one ; and without injury or

* Matt. v. 29, 30.

† Gen. xix. 20.

detriment to my circumstances or fortune. In this way, does the man of pleasure argue ; little considering, that how suitable soever it may be for one of better income or less expensive connexions, to him it is a crime. His necessary and unavoidable disbursements exhaust and swallow up all his profits or income ; and he cannot give way to such pleasures, however innocent in themselves, without injuring his family, and perhaps running the hazard of defrauding the honest and industrious tradesman.

INDULGENCE in pleasure is moreover a serious evil to such persons ; as it weakens, enervates, and destroys those very powers and faculties, which may really be necessary for procuring the common wants of life. The supplies which nature regularly and duly calls for, are its undoubted right ; and these, certainly, in the first place, have the best claim to our attention and regard. The demand increases proportionably as our families increase ; and whatever some might probably be enabled to afford for the purposes

poses of pleasure * before, all their patrimony or income may perhaps be barely sufficient to support a family, in a way adequate to their rank or station in life. But here again occurs the difficulty alluded to in the text. Have such persons been inured or accustomed to pleasure? and shall they now be so unpolite and old-fashioned as to withdraw from the circles, in which they have hitherto figured, on account of an increasing

* By PLEASURE, as generally considered in this discourse, is to be understood, such simple recreations and relaxations of the mind, as are no way sinful or contrary to the laws of God. And though such relaxations may be sometimes attended with small expences; when this advantage of increasing activity and energy is thereby procured, the disposition of some part of our superfluous supplies for such a purpose is well repaid by the exchange of improving health and vigour. But if, as I have supposed, the real wants and necessities of a family demand our utmost resources, such small expences must not be incurred; the reflection of our thereby creating difficulties, which might be prevented, would destroy the expected improvement of the spirits; and relaxations of another nature ought to be practised, wherein even those small expences, now to be indulged no longer with innocence, will be avoided.

family?

family? This, they suppose, would betray such a sign of poverty or meanness as they cannot endure. Their companions would ridicule them; their acquaintance grow cool; their pretended friends forget them. This is a sacrifice they cannot be prevailed upon to offer up. Pleasure must be pursued at all events; and against such pleasure as is innocent, and is accompanied with the advantage of having a natural tendency to preserve our connexions in life, who shall dare to oppose himself? Pleasure, then, is pursued; and what is the result? Embarrassment of circumstances must consequently follow; and the proper wants and necessities of life are either procured with a more sparing hand, so as to produce or occasion real misery, or, which is commonly as bad or worse, the unhappy votary of pleasure falls a victim to his folly. The delusion, so infatuated has he been, is never discovered till his own accumulated distress, and the gnawing and agonizing pangs of horror and despair which are overwhelming his

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wretched family, bring him to his reason, and convince him fatally of his stupidity and error.

THIS evil, great as it is, which proceeds from an improper and unseasonable use of pleasure, is hastened also by that feebleness and languor, which pleasure too commonly creates in the animal system; thereby rendering it less capable of providing for the necessary wants of life. For if all the exertions of man, which is the case I have supposed, and it is the case of thousands, are but barely sufficient to the support of himself and family; if all the care and œconomy he can exercise will but just serve to maintain them in proper character, according to their relative situation in the world; what madness and infatuation must it be to weaken and destroy those very powers and faculties, which are so essentially necessary for this purpose, by indulging in pleasures, the expences of which exceed their abilities? But into this madness and infatuation do many persons hurry, as I have just now shewn,
from

from false notions of honour; to whom it is as impossible to retreat, as for “the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots.”

I SHALL not at present enlarge upon the character alluded to in the text, or consider it in that full extent of which the subject is naturally capable. As it more especially relates to the sinful conduct of mankind, and the commission of actions which are in themselves contrary to the known laws and decrees of the Almighty; the subject requires much more time, than the usual duration of discourses of this nature will admit. I have only touched upon the common and acknowledged effects of habits in general; what I have said in particular of pleasure, has not been of such pleasure as in its own nature is sinful, but of such only as becomes so by an undue and unseasonable use of it. What remains to be said on this important and awful subject, must be reserved to another occasion; in the mean time I must request your permission to

suggest a few important considerations, which at this time merit your serious attention.

HAS the slight sketch of the picture I have drawn excited your notice? I need not inform you, that it is a true and faithful representation of what every day passes in the world. Does the scene, even in this introductory view of it, alarm you? What would it do, were it fully embellished and painted in those glowing colours it is capable of, and when every touch of the flowing pencil has been applied to it? If such are the dreadful effects, even in temporal matters, of the abuse only of innocent pleasures; what must be the result of a constant practice of alarming vices? what the consequence of an habitual breach of the express laws and commands of the Almighty? As seamen, perhaps, I have less pointedly addressed you at this time than on some former occasions; but the few hints I have thrown out on the habit of swearing must suffice to convince you, that you are not the less

less concerned in them. Indeed, it must be evident, that they are equally to be considered as a part of the great and important scheme which these discourses have in view.

God grant that what has now been delivered may be productive of much good fruit, to the honour and glory of his name, for Jesus Christ's sake !

S E R M O N X.

*On the Difficulty of conquering evil
Habits.*

JER. XIII. 23.

CAN THE ETHIOPIAN CHANGE HIS SKIN,
OR THE LEOPARD HIS SPOTS; THEN MAY
YE ALSO DO GOOD, THAT ARE ACCUS-
TOMED TO DO EVIL.

AWFUL words these! and such as
should excite us all duly to reflect on
their tendency and importance. Is this the
effect of habit and indulgence in vice? can
that habit only be overcome, when natural
impossibilities, even miracles of a very un-
common nature, are to take place? Con-
sider, my friends, we have an awakening
subject before us; and the time is short, in

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which

which we may have the opportunity of establishing an interest in heaven on a sure and permanent basis.

THIS passage of scripture has already very lately fallen under our notice and attention; and a partial examination of its nature and import submitted for the benefit and advantage of this audience. But it will be of singular service to most of you who are now here assembled, to proceed to a fuller discussion of its principle; and to exemplify and illustrate the subject more largely and copiously. And since I have already spoken of innocent pleasures, and explained some circumstances which may render them criminal and sinful; I shall now take notice of those, which must be acknowledged to be more immediately and directly, though not absolutely, forbidden.

BUT as their criminality and sinfulness, after what has been offered, will not be disputed; I shall step aside to consider the reason why such offences are not fully and pointedly

pointedly condemned in scripture. And to this purpose the Preacher long ago observed, that although * “ God had made man up-
“ right, yet he had sought out many in-
“ ventions ;” many, as well in their nature as in their object. And if Solomon in his days could make this observation, when, with all his superiority of knowledge and wisdom, wherein he † “ exceeded all the
“ kings of the earth,” the tide of science was but at *young flood* in comparison of what it is at present ; what may we say to the inventions of the present age, which so far excel all that we can learn of the state of those times, or for many ages before or after them ? Inventions, which would scarce have admitted of a rational belief in those days, from the prejudices which then universally prevailed ; inventions, which would have been deemed so improbable at that time, as to have rendered an inundation of miracles necessary, to gain merely a simple assent to them, inventions, which, however hard it is to suppose that they could

* Eccles. vii. 29.

† 1 Kings, x. 23.

then

then have been credited fully upon any testimony whatever, in the present enlightened ages of science and experience, when knowledge may be considered as swelling apace towards the *spring-tide* of glory, we have no difficulty in embracing,

HENCE we see the reason why the scriptures could not possibly provide against every breach of God's commands in express terms. For if knowledge and learning have made such rapid advances towards perfection, we must not overlook the refinements which vice and an immoderate and unseasonable love of pleasure have also introduced. But how could the admission of such refinements be counteracted and resisted? Consistent with man's free agency, it is not easy to give an answer. A direct and immediate refutation, from the authority of God, could not be necessary; for this would have required a succession of prophets or inspired * divines,

* What has been mentioned in some other notes, will be applicable here. INSPIRATION is not here used

divines, commissioned with express authority from heaven, to declare God's abhorrence and detestation of them. And still there might probably be as much reason to complain, as in those early times; still these prophets might be unsuccessful in stemming the torrent of refined iniquity. All the efforts of the ancient prophets to produce a reformation among the Jews, and to excite them to repentance and amendment of life, were ineffectual. They were carried into captivity for their sins and transgressions, notwithstanding all their prophets; and even in Babylon, the prophet Ezekiel is obliged to spur and stimulate them to the exercise of their reason, by an alarming appeal to their passions; he was compelled to declare the necessity he was under to be the unpleasing and unwelcome messenger of

used in the common and ordinary sense of it, as it may be applied to all mankind; but in that more particular and extraordinary meaning, as it relates to persons especially set apart, in an unusual way, for the performance of divine offices, and to accomplish the purposes of God's good providence.

such

such awful intelligence. * “ Son of man,” says he, “ I send thee to the children of “ Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath “ rebelled against me : they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even “ unto this very day. For they are impudent children, and stiff-hearted. And “ they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, for they are a rebellious house, yet shall know that there “ hath been a prophet among them. And “ thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, “ neither be afraid of their words, nor be “ dismayed at their looks : though briars “ and thorns be with thee, and thou dost “ dwell among scorpions. And thou shalt “ speak my words unto them, whether “ they will hear, or whether they will forbear : for they are most rebellious. But “ be not thou rebellious, like that rebellious “ house.”

It should ever be seriously impressed on our minds, as an awakening caution, that

* Ezek. ii. 3-8.

we do not fall into the lamentable condition, against which another prophet, in an earlier age *, hath denounced so solemn a woe †. "Woe unto them," says he, "that call evil, good, and good, evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter." Of this the present age, it must be acknowledged, is in extreme danger; from that abundance of sophistry and casuistical evasion which so much prevails, and the numerous refinements and subtle disquisitions which men have invented to confound the distinctions of vice and virtue.

PERHAPS, indeed, it may be unnecessary, before the present audience, to enlarge greatly on this topic; nor is it any way im-

* JEREMIAH lived about the time of JOSIAH and JEHOIAHAZ, the former of whom died but 30 years before the captivity. EZEKIEL lived during the captivity; but ISAIAH lived in the days of UZZIAH, JOTHAM, AHAZ, and HEZEKIAH, the last of whom died, not quite 80 years before JOSIAH.

† Isa. v. 20.

portant

portant to such seamen, as, in the truly characteristic and distinguishing spirit of British sailors, are more usually noted for a daring temerity and a rude effrontery*. But are not seamen also noted for many vices, of which to make mention, even in the most decent terms possible, would be almost defiling the very name of religion? For, alas! how can the crimes which too

* Rough and uncouth as many of the British seamen are, in their manners and behaviour, it must be obvious, that, on certain occasions, they are not deficient in the common forms of civility and external respect. Their mode of shewing it may not, indeed, at all times be the most polite; yet the principle of it is strongly ingrafted in their nature or habit. To their officers, they never fail of bestowing it; whether from a conviction, that their neglect of it would expose them, at least to a severe reprimand, if not to a corporal correction and punishment, it is not of importance to enquire. The fact only is, what I am desirous of noticing; and demonstrably proves that they can behave respectfully to their earthly masters, whenever they please. What an argument arises from hence, to induce them, by a suitable management, to be equally respectful and civil to their heavenly Master?

many

many seamen are generally understood thoughtlessly to run into, be expressed with any modesty or decency? If it reminds me of St. Paul's observation, of some of the most degenerate and depraved among the Ephesians, the application, it is to be feared, would be too well founded; * "it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret." Still, however, as if some reflection and sense of shame was left, amidst all this depravity, they were willing, at least, to conceal it from man, though they so grossly disregarded the all-seeing eye of God. Can so much be said at all times for the depraved conduct of many who call themselves Christians, who are probably strangers to every principle of common morality? I fear, indeed, it cannot; and whilst I would wish to express a faint hope, that there are no such persons in this audience, the general degeneracy to which I have been alluding, gives too much cause to fear, that the

* Eph. v. 12.

present community may not be wholly exempt from such characters.

SINCE the text supposes that there are persons to be found, who “are accustomed to do evil,” this will justify me in the use I have made, and hereafter design to make, of it, by glancing at some of the evils, to which seamen are more particularly exposed. It also evidently discovers the danger of those evils; and shews, that when they become habitual, the hope of reformation is exceedingly doubtful, the prospect of amendment gloomy and forbidding, and the possibility of its being effected barely admissible. Reasoning, however, from things NATURAL to things MORAL; what is acknowledged to be impossible in the one case, must be considered as expressing very great and extreme difficulty in the other. The repeated calls and invitations to repentance and amendment of life, which are every where to be met with in the scriptures, must suppose that such a reformation is not impossible. The difficulty is
fixed

fixed in the hearts and dispositions of men themselves, and not in God's unwillingness to recover such sinners; or in the actual nature of repentance and reformation. What Jeremiah said to the Jews on this subject, in another part of his prophecy, is very expressive; * "Return ye now every
" one from his evil way, and make your
" ways and your doings good: And they
" said, There is no hope, but we will
" walk after our own devices." How prevalent must be the force of habit! which could fly in the face of such pressing exhortations and warnings, and disregard the calls and intreaties of a merciful God!

ONE of the most glaring and notorious transgressions against the laws both of God and man, to which seamen are subject, is that of common and habitual swearing; a vice not less unprofitable than offensive, even to common decency and good manners. On the present occasion, I mean not to enlarge upon the wickedness of it, which

* Jer. xviii. 11, 12.

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indeed

indeed must be notorious, and of which too, possibly, I may treat hereafter ; but my particular design in mentioning it now, is to appeal to the observation and experience of all who hear me, whether, as a habit, it does not prove all which I have advanced on this subject.

BUT I will suppose the habitual swearer to be in other respects, as he frequently is, a man of integrity and uprightness ; * humane, friendly, and generous. Such persons as these have often been convinced of the impropriety of this practice ; and have really wished that the correction of such a habit was any way practicable. Yet if at any time you press this subject a little more closely, you will then be told that the strength of habit is too powerful for their utmost endeavours to surmount ; and they

* It will be obvious from the subsequent part of this and the next paragraph, that these observations are more particularly applicable to the warrant or commission officers ; for common seamen are not usually found to make such reflections.

experience the truth of the apostle's assertion on a similar occasion, * "that when " they would do good, evil is present with " them." They will tell you, that their station on board a ship of war is of such a nature, that the duties of the ship cannot be performed without it; as it is well known, that seamen in general are so inattentive to the orders of any subordinate officer without this, that they consider the command as nugatory and unimportant, unless those orders are accompanied with an oath. Hence, without this, the duties required would not be performed.

IN examining this plea, which appears to have some foundation in fact, I shall give it all the attention to which it can be justly entitled. But I fear, upon a very cursory examination, it will be found to prove too much; and instead of being admitted as an excuse, it will really and eventually become an aggravation of the crime. What does it prove less, than that seamen are in general

* Rom. vii. 21.

so depraved, that they are not to be wrought upon by any mild or moderate means? that their immediate superiors must be wicked in their own way, in order to insure attention to their orders? What less can be inferred from hence, than that they have been inured to such a liberty of speech and freedom of action, as are inconsistent with their condition as finite beings, who are accountable for their conduct to an Almighty Creator? What less does it shew, than that they have been accustomed to despise all laws, both human and divine, and to disregard every principle of restraint, though the very being and existence of society depend on their observance? That such consequences are not perceived, and perhaps not thought of, by the habitual swearer, is not to be admitted as any extenuation; which only shew the infatuation of habit, that can overlook the natural result and tendency of a practice, which answers no single good purpose or end whatsoever.

BUT

BUT you say, that you cannot correct this habit. Recollect yourselves a little, and consider if this plea will any way avail you. I tell you in plain words, that it will not; and you will yourselves, I am convinced, acknowledge it. Suppose, for instance, any of you who is at present, and perhaps hath been for a long time past, habituated to this odious vice, should be called unexpectedly into the presence of an admiral, or, to carry the instance farther, of a first lord of the admiralty; what would be your conduct on that occasion? would not your language be respectful and submissive? would you not carefully guard your tongues, actuated as you would be by the hope of advancement or by the fear of offence? would not this caution in your speech continue so long as your superior in rank and station preserves and supports his proper * dignity and character? Nay, I ask farther; would

* Power and authority may be so happily tempered with condescension and goodness, as to prevent the undue approaches of inferiors to familiarity. An instance of this occurs in a former discourse, where an

would your conversation then be interlarded with oaths? would not the consciousness of your own inferiority act the part of a faithful centinel to your lips, and prevent their uttering any thing which could even admit an offensive interpretation?

HAVE I not said enough to prove, that there are occasions on which you CAN command your words, though habituated to a contrary practice? Lay your hands upon your hearts, and not one of you can seriously deny it. The difficulty of conquering and subduing such habits has been acknowledged; but I have sufficiently shewn that it is not impossible. It has been proved evidently, by a pointed instance, peculiarly adapted to your profession and occupation as seamen, that reformation is practicable; that the difficulty is frequently

actual fact is alluded to; which, the more it is considered, the more it must give pleasure to the humane and candid mind. Tyranny and imperiousness are to be detested and abhorred; subordination and discipline to be carefully retained and preserved.

more

more imaginary than real ; that the very presence of any one, considerably your superior, has a commanding influence on your behaviour. This is a fact, too notorious to be disputed.

HENCE then, the mode of conduct is no longer to be doubted, which is calculated to effect the laudable purpose of reformation from this or any other habitual vice. DAVID himself hath set an example ; * “ set a watch,” says he, in his prayer to the Almighty, “ before my mouth, and “ keep the door of my lips.” Harassed and persecuted as he was by SAUL, he was afraid of being surprized in any disloyal expressions ; and therefore prayed to be delivered from them. Imitate his conduct, then, in correcting this habit ; suppose yourself constantly in the presence of some great man, which will restrain your tongues ; as you must be assured that you are always observed by the eye of God,

* Psa. cxli. 3.

before whom you must * “ give account
“ of every idle,” and certainly then of
every wicked “ word that you shall speak,
“ at the day of judgment.”

* Matt. xii. 36.

S E R M O N XI.

On the Advantages of a religious Life.

I TIM. IV. 8.

GODLINESS IS PROFITABLE UNTO ALL THINGS; HAVING THE PROMISE OF THE LIFE THAT NOW IS, AND OF THAT WHICH IS TO COME.

TO an assembly like the present, it cannot be justifiable on the principles of common prudence, to treat this subject in a common manner, or in such a way as topics of this nature have been usually handled. It has been my object uniformly in these discourses, to consider the peculiar nature and disposition of the audience I have so frequently had the pleasure and satisfaction of addressing; and the reflection affords me the most substantial ground of comfort

comfort, and greatly redounds to your credit, that the freedom of speech which the consciousness of my duty has induced me to exercise on these various occasions, has been in general faithfully interpreted according to the design and intention.

THE assertion of the text is of a very important and interesting nature. It must be an engaging and encouraging doctrine to be assured, on the authority of an apostle, that "godliness is profitable unto all things." To the present assembly, I trust, it will have a peculiar weight and influence. From motives of a particular and professional nature, I have endeavoured gradually and progressively to excite your attention to the general principles of your duty; and I have at this time selected these words to discourse from, to persuade and engage you to consider my design still farther, and to awaken your hopes and enlarge your prospects to still farther advantages.

Is “godliness profitable unto all things?” What better and more beneficial object can you have in view than this? Does not the hope of profit of one kind or other actuate all your motions? Does not this intention pervade and influence all your actions? Supposing that profit may be meant of the good things of this life; you have this view even in your pleasures. You expect to receive an acquisition and addition to your happiness and satisfaction, even in the pursuit and enjoyment of those pleasures; and although they may be of such a nature as is very inconsistent with the hope or prospect of gain, which is usually understood by profit, yet so far as they obtain a partial happiness, the desired effect may be considered as in some degree produced. It is profit, therefore, which you expect from your pleasures; but that profit, as being of a momentary and sensual nature, cannot be permanent and lasting.

THAT profit to which godliness invites, on the contrary, is of a durable nature. It
has

has not barely a "promise of the life that now is," which probably most of the present audience may consider as the only valuable promise they could desire; but it is a promise "of that which is to come," discovering a distant prospect, extending beyond the present life, and directing our views to a future condition, in which we may, if it is not our own fault, be completely happy to eternity. To this permanent and lasting profit is godliness peculiarly advantageous. In this concise but extensive promise are time and eternity comprehended. The text also says, that it is "profitable unto ALL THINGS;" and when we consider that the epistle was directed to the bishop of the Ephesians, who were immersed in the worst kind of heathenish superstition, idolatry, and wickedness, it has evidently a still more important and extensive meaning. It shews, that whatever they might have been accustomed to delight in, would be insignificant and not worth the mention, in comparison of this godliness; that they need not fear the loss of any
real

real or substantial good or advantage, and that no inconvenience, which they need regard, could be experienced by their forsaking their former course of life; that "godliness," as being "profitable unto ALL THINGS," would be productive of such blessings and benefits, as would abundantly compensate for the exchange of all their false and deceitful enjoyments; that it would have this inestimable advantage, not barely of securing good in the present life, but of ensuring an eternity of happiness in the world to come.

CONSIDERING, then, the state of the world, and the judgment which mankind were enabled to form of it from natural causes; it must certainly be of the greatest importance to be persuaded, that Christianity does not contradict, but support and improve the grounds on which this judgment is founded. It was then, and ever will be, an established and fundamental maxim in the divine proceedings with mortal

tal men, that * “ as many as have sinned
 “ without law, shall also perish without
 “ law ;” and “ that as many as have sin-
 “ ned in the law, shall be judged by the
 “ law ;” and that it shall be exacted †
 “ according to what a man hath, and not
 “ according to what he hath not.” From
 him to whom hath been liberally commit-
 ted a portion of ‡ five talents, the improve-
 ment of five other talents may be rationally
 expected ; whilst from him who has re-
 ceived but two, no more than two can rea-
 sonably be hoped for. St. Paul hath clearly
 illustrated this matter, in explaining the
 maxim I have just related § ; “ When the
 “ Gentiles, which have not the law, do
 “ by nature the things contained in the
 “ law, these having not the law, are a law
 “ unto themselves ; which shew the work
 “ of the law written in their hearts, their
 “ conscience also bearing witness, and their
 “ thoughts the mean while accusing or else

* Rom. ii. 12.

† 2 Cor. viii. 12.

‡ Matt. xxv. 20, 22.

§ Rom. ii. 14, 15, 13, 16.

“ excusing

“ excusing one another.” And, as he observes in the same argument, “ the doers
“ of the law” only, as respectively incumbent on these different people, whether that law be natural, legal, or evangelical, and
“ not the hearers, are just before God ;” and it is by this law, thus respectively binding on men according to their circumstances and situations in life, that “ God
“ shall” hereafter “ judge the secrets of
“ men by Jesus Christ.”

It would be tedious, and to many of the present audience uninteresting, to enlarge upon the apostle’s argument to the Roman converts, or to point out every striking observation ; this indeed might be pertinent and applicable to the doctrine of the text, and to an assembly of a different complexion its utility and importance are not to be doubted. To your minds, however, it is more than probable, its prolixity and copiousness would be truly fatiguing. Another reason too, and that no inconsiderable one, may be inferred from an aversion, which
per-

perhaps most of you would discover, to be compared with heathens and infidels. At present, therefore, I mean not to risque the hazard of incurring your displeasure, which I have hitherto so happily avoided in treating those awakening subjects already submitted to your consideration, by such an extensive comment on this subject, as the nature of the argument would justly supply.

SOME of the circumstances of the apostle's arguments are indeed of such a tendency, that it would be a manifest injustice to pass them over; particularly those, which the apostle produces in favour of REVEALED religion, in preference to NATURAL. Yet it is certain, that the most essential advantage obtained by revelation, was, the assurance of God's will, which confirmed the sober dictates of reason, and placed the motives of obedience and submission to divine authority, upon a principle of faith in the truth of such revelation. * "What advantage hath the Jew?" says he, "or

* Rom. iii. 1, 2.

" what

“ what profit is there of circumcision ?”
The reply is worthy of our most serious attention, and ought to be engraven on the hearts of all men. “ Much every way : chiefly,
“ because that unto them were committed
“ the oracles of God.” Change but the word, and what is here asserted in favour of the Jew, is applicable also to the Christian circumcision, or that of baptism ; and then the whole tenor of the argument may be applied also to the Christian. In this application we are also warranted, because the apostle himself hath transferred the argument expressly to the professors of Christianity ; when, after having quoted a great many passages out of the Psalms, and concluded with that remarkable one, * “ There
“ is no fear of God before their eyes,” he infers this conclusion. “ Now we know,
“ that what things soever the law saith,
“ it saith to them who are under the law :
“ that every mouth may be stopped, and
“ all the world may become guilty before
“ God. Therefore by the deeds of the

* Rom. iii. 18—22

“law shall no flesh be justified in his sight :
“for by the law is the knowledge of sin,
“But now the righteousness of God without
“the law,” meaning evidently, as he fully
explains himself, the revelation of the gospel,
“is manifested, being witnessed,” that is,
foretold “by the law and the prophets ;
“even the righteousness of God, which is
“by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and
“upon all that believe.”

THUS have I enlarged upon the different dispensations or laws, by which men shall be judged hereafter ; but principally with the design of setting forth the importance of godliness in each of them, and consequently to prove the doctrine of the text, that it “is profitable unto all things.” This is plainly and evidently the language of all revelation, which is, as I have observed, the language of nature in her best state ; in which we must all agree, if we mean to have any share in the promises of revelation, either “of the life that now is,
“or of that which is to come.”

It

It would, I presume, be of little importance to this audience, to shew that these words may be interpreted of the two dispensations of Moses and Christ, to which probably the apostle might refer. For by "the life that now is," we may consider the conveniences and necessities of our mortal state and condition; and these words which refer to this promise from the Almighty, as a thing generally acknowledged, and therefore unnecessary for him to prove, must remind the Ephesians, and all others through them, that they ought to put an entire confidence in the providential goodness and mercy of God. To the godly * "all things pertaining unto life and godliness" are and have been promised both under the Old and New Testament. All history is full of it; and precept also is entirely correspondent. To name but a few instances of the former, would carry me beyond my prescribed limits; and the scripture so very fully abounds with the latter, that I scarce know where to begin, or where to end. It

* 2 Pet. i. 3.

is necessary, however, in illustration of our subject, that I should take notice of some of them ; which I propose to do as briefly as possible.

WHAT a noble exhortation to obedience is that in Deuteronomy? urged by every motive and persuasion, which can possibly operate on a rational mind. * “ Thou
“ shalt keep the commandments of the
“ Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and
“ to fear him. For the Lord thy God
“ bringeth thee into a good land ; a land
“ of brooks of water, of fountains, and
“ depths that spring out of all valleys and
“ hills ; a land of wheat, and barley, and
“ vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates ;
“ a land of oil-olive and honey ; a land
“ wherein thou shalt eat bread without
“ scarceness ; thou shalt not lack any thing
“ in it. But if thou do at all forget the
“ Lord thy God, I testify against you this
“ day, that ye shall surely perish.” Did not Samuel address the Israelites in these

* Deut. viii. 6, 7, 8, 9, 19.

remarkable words? * “ Turn ye not aside
“ from following the Lord, but serve the
“ Lord with all your heart; and turn ye
“ not aside. For the Lord will not forsake
“ his people, for his great name’s sake;
“ because it hath pleased the Lord to make
“ you his people.” What said David?
† “ The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not
“ want; he maketh me to lie down in
“ green pastures; he leadeth me beside the
“ still waters.” And what saith the voice
of Wisdom? ‡ “ I love them that love me,
“ and those that seek me early, shall find
“ me. I cause those that love me, to in-
“ herit substance; and I will fill their
“ treasures.”

THE text is an instance that the New Testament is not unmindful of the good things of this life. It has the promise of the life that now is; and our Saviour to his disciples exhorts, not to neglect the good things of the present life, but to § “ seek

* 1 Sam. xii. 20—22.

† Psal. xxiii. 1, 2.

‡ Prov. viii. 17, 21.

§ Matt. vi. 33.

“ first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.” What is this in effect but the language of Moses in Deuteronomy? If you are righteous and obedient, your endeavours shall be successful, and the necessities of life shall not be wanting to you. What is this but the language of the prophet Isaiah? * “ If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.”

BUT the style of the New Testament is confessedly more divine and spiritual in its nature. It does not consist so much in temporal and present promises, as in future and eternal ones; yet is it not so wholly indifferent to these external wants, as to disregard them. For St. Paul checks this disorderly spirit, in a very pointed manner, in the Thessalonians; charging them that they † “ studied to be quiet, and to do their own business, and to work with their

* Isa. i. 19.

† 1 Thes. iv. 11. — 2 Thes. iii. 10, 11, 12.

“ own

“own hands, as he had commanded them.”
And again, “We commanded you, that if
“any would not work, neither should he
“eat; for we hear that there are some
“which walk among you disorderly, and
“them that are such we command and
“exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that
“with quietness they work, and eat their
“own bread,” and not sponge upon the
goodness and liberality of the charitable and
well-disposed, to the detriment of others
who are really necessitous.

THE welfare of the soul, to which our
conduct in this life should be directed,
is what more particularly employed the
pens, and engaged the labours of persons in
the New Testament. It is to the * “one
“thing needful,” which the writings of the
New Testament principally look. † “What
“will it profit, if a man shall gain the whole
“world, and lose his own soul?” is the
awakening exhortation of our blessed Sa-

* Luke x. 42.

† Mark viii. 36.

viour, * “ Fear not them which kill,” or in any respect injure “ the body, and after “ that have no more that they can do; but “ fear him, who is able to destroy both “ body and soul in hell.” And if to fear him, certainly then to obey him; to obey him, in thought, in word, and in deed; to obey him, in truth and sincerity, that you may partake of his gracious promises. † “ In my father’s house,” says he to his disciples, “ are many mansions; and I go to “ prepare a place for you, that where I “ am, there ye may be also.” And on another occasion, ‡ “ Ye which have followed “ me in the regeneration, shall sit upon “ thrones, judging the tribes of Israel, and “ shall inherit everlasting life.” And to this purpose St. Paul from Isaiah, § “ Eye “ hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither “ hath it entered into the heart of man to “ conceive, the things which God hath “ prepared for them that love him.”

* Luke xii. 4 — Matt. x. 28. † John xiv. 2, 3.

‡ Matt. xix. 28, 29. § 1 Cor. ii. 9.—Isa. lxiv. 4.

WHAT more can I add, but to press the consideration of these things on your minds? and may God grant, in his mercy, that they may be effectual to your eternal happiness.

S E R M O N X I I .

Advantages of gaining God's Favour considered.

I SAM. XX. 3.

T H E R E I S B U T A S T E P B E T W E E N M E
A N D D E A T H .

I N generous instances of brotherly love and sympathizing compassion to one another, there is not perhaps any class of mankind, in which such virtues are so singularly manifested as in that of seamen. Proverbially liberal and profuse, the wants of a ship-mate, if his conduct has been in any degree sociable and amiable, are never disregarded by his companion, when he has it in his power to administer to the calls and conveniences of life. Accounts of this liberality, sometimes bordering upon the figurative and incredible, are too numerous, and
too

too well established in most of your minds to need a recital.

AFTER noticing the peculiar friendship alluded to in the verse, of which the text is an interesting part, our subject will more immediately relate to our situation as seamen; embarked on the fluid element of the ocean, and separated from it but by a narrow plank, a continued and a literal monitor to us, that “there is but a step between us and death.”

IN the history of David and Jonathan, we have the most lively and important demonstration of the peculiar advantages to be obtained from friendship. Chequered as was the life of the former, and diversified in every possible condition from the sunshine of a court to the gloom and distress of a desert; a friend must indeed be a very valuable and important acquisition. And in this respect he was singularly happy; in the greatest trials, he could still descry a ray of hope that this friendship would, one time or other,

other, essentially contribute to his happiness, and lead to the enjoyment of more pleasing scenes. For his gentle manners had attracted the regard, and secured the affections of the king's son; who, on many occasions, demonstrated the sincerity and permanency of that friendship, by acts of the most extraordinary and heroic nature.

THE chapter of the text, with that which precedes it, is most peculiarly adapted to prove this attachment. In the former, we read that he rescued David from the effects of his father's fury, and engaged Saul to sanction with an oath his personal safety; but the dæmon of jealousy overcame the king's resolves, and the reflections on the sin of ingratitude and perjury were insufficient to check and restrain the impetuosity and violence of his temper. The king acts more like a hardened assassin, than the head of a numerous people; and both justice and equity are sacrificed at the shrine of passion and fury.

WITH

WITH this and the account of an extraordinary instance of the over-ruling providence of God, which gave a temporary check to this outrage and extravagance of conduct, the preceding chapter closes ; and this of the text is occupied in relating the prudential and ordinary means which were adopted, to second this miraculous interposition in his favour. His conference with Jonathan is at large recorded ; and the significant tokens which were used on the occasion, that no discoveries might be made of their proceedings, it must be acknowledged, were extremely well adapted to this purpose.

FROM the introduction it appears, that Jonathan was in high esteem both with his father and brother in law ; for then the government of Israel by kings was in its infancy, and faction had not yet erected its hydra head. But this, very probably, was the season of separation, when perhaps they might meet no more ; and therefore they are both equally urgent to exact the most unequivocal proofs of attachment, and to en-

engage each other to acts of kindness and beneficence to their posterity after them. There were grounds to suppose, from Saul's late conduct, that he was determined to destroy David; of which David apprizes Jonathan, who resolves to discover the degree of probability to which it is entitled, at the approaching festival of the new moon, when every courtier was to be in his place. The absence of David was to be made the touchstone of the experiment; and Saul's design was to be collected from his conduct, in consequence of this absence. "There is but a step between me and death," says David, and therefore the necessity of my departure is urgent; and "whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee," is the pleasing and soothing reply of Jonathan.

SPEEDILY was this matter brought to the trial, and the effect was correspondent and manifest. A sufficient discovery of Saul's design was evident in his conduct; and the

* Ver. 4.

signal agreed upon to announce the heavy tidings is displayed. * “Is not the arrow beyond thee?” was the melancholy watchword, to shew the necessity of David’s immediate departure. If the opportunity of future conversation should not occur, as was greatly to be doubted, this was the appointed messenger of the gloomy intelligence. But that opportunity did occur, and a mournful meeting it was; but they eagerly embraced it to renew their vows, and to pledge a reciprocal and inviolable friendship to themselves and their posterity.

HERE indeed was a profusion of kindness. He even presumes to expostulate with his father on the wickedness of his resolves; † “Wherefore shall he be slain? What hath he done?” No part of his conduct appears to warrant such a determination; and all our actions ought to be founded on justifiable principles. But for this freedom he was exposed to the greatest danger; and his life appeared to be in jeopardy, and to

* Ver. 37.

† Ver. 32.

be demanded by his father as the penalty of forfeiting his good opinion. * “ And Saul
“ cast a javelin at him to smite him ;
“ whereby Jonathan knew that it was de-
“ termined of his father to slay David.
“ So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce
“ anger, and did eat no meat the second
“ day of the month ; for he was grieved
“ for David, because his father had done
“ him shame.”

DAVID's apprehensions, therefore, were well grounded. It was very manifest, that
“ there was but a step between him and
“ death ;” and that the friendly interposi-
tion of Jonathan was the only natural and
ordinary means left to deliver him from the
threatened destruction. But that friendship
was created and effected by Providence for
the most important purposes ; and, my
friends, it is the same Providence which
preserves us so continually from the merci-
less jaws of the watry element, through

* Ver. 33, 34.

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which

which we traverse the unfathomable ocean. "There is but a step between us and death." Consider seriously the awakening sound; and look forward to the consequences of a sudden consignment to a watry tomb. For to this we may be hurried instantaneously, and without any warning. Consider, too, the interposing hand of Providence, which supports and preserves us, through raging billows and stormy seas; for what else but this can possibly protect and uphold us, when the barrier of safety which natural means and the exercises of art supply us with, is so very thin and so liable to accidents.

BUT the consideration of this providential interposition ought to be productive of many very weighty and awful consequences. It should lead us to reflect on the dignity and majesty of God, and of the design and object of this protection. It should excite in us a sense of gratitude for the daily blessings which are bestowed upon mankind in general, but especially the favours for which
seamen

seamen are more particularly bound to praise and glorify the Lord their God. Upon every occasion we may truly say, with a more than common propriety, * “ in the “ midst of life we are in death ;” for besides the usual dangers of life, to which all men are equally exposed, many peculiar dangers attend seamen, to whom the language of the text may be applied, with a very extraordinary and essential energy, “ There is but a step between us and “ death.”

It is the providential hand of God, therefore, which upholds all men ; but surely seamen cannot be inattentive to the remarkable manner in which this is applicable to them.

OUGHT not this consideration, then, to have its due weight and effect upon our conduct ? Are we convinced of the providential goodness of God ? Are we satisfied that he was at first the creator, and that he

* Burial service.

continues to be the governor of the world? Have we a demonstration incontestible and unerring, that, as seamen, we are peculiarly comprehended in that government, and are the special subjects of his regard and concern? These discourses have abundantly manifested this important truth; a truth, to which we should act wisely to take heed, as replete with events, and abounding with inferences of the greatest magnitude.

For this government cannot be maintained without laws and regulations. All society is a demonstration of its necessity. The statutes and ordinances of all states and kingdoms are so many proofs of its being indispensable, and congenial with the very existence of society. If God is the governor of the whole world; can this office be executed without a due attention to propriety, to justice, and to veracity? God would cease to be God, if he were not the fountain and origin of order and regularity. He could not answer that character

racter of perfection, which we have conceived of him, if he was not strictly mindful of the claims of right and equity. He could not exact a regard to truth and sincerity, though every society must and ever will naturally demand this of its members, unless he himself was entirely influenced by a spirit and principle of veracity.

It is from these considerations that I would infer a most essential doctrine, every way peculiarly meriting and requiring the notice of persons, whose professional life is naval and maritime. God's providential goodness to us, however it may too frequently be unnoticed, must be acknowledged. But shall we be ungrateful for this goodness? Shall we be unmindful of those laws and precepts, which he has given us for our conduct and direction? Shall we disregard the considerations of his nature, and oppose, as much as we can possibly, the operations of good order, of justice, and truth? Is this the recompence that we make for his care and re-

gard for us ? Is he himself under the moral necessity of regulating and superintending the world, by the laws of order ? and will he pass over and excuse the breach of them in his creatures ? Are these considerations of sufficient importance to be inculcated and enforced on mankind in general ; and will they not have peculiar propriety in being addressed particularly to seamen ? Surely, my friends, ingratitude is not the distinguishing feature of British seamen.

FOR the exercise of this gratitude, then, I call upon you at this time ; for the exercise of thanksgiving to your greatest and best benefactor. Since “ there is but a “ step between us and death,” let us consider how narrow the limits are which circumscribe our safety, and how thin the partition which separates us from a speedy passage to eternity. Let us consider, too, the providential interposition of God’s merciful goodness, and the value and importance of making our peace with God by reformation and amendment. It is for this
good

good end that those favourable manifestations of his kindness are vouchsafed; and this step, small as it is, which preserves us from destruction, and intercepts our danger, may be converted to the purpose of promoting our everlasting welfare. This narrow limit, which, through the Almighty's blessing, is the means of our safety, should be considered truly and impartially, and improved to the ends of which it is capable; for God is not obliged always to * "strive with man," and to manifest his providence in acts of kindness to undeserving objects. We should endeavour to render ourselves worthy of his care and attention; to demonstrate our grateful sense of his goodness to us; and to be conformed to his pure nature and essence, by constant obedience to those laws and precepts, in the practice of which his divine image consists.

SEAMEN have additional incentives to rouse and excite them to consider their condition, as dependent and frail beings. In-

* Gen. vi. 3.

dependent of the common weaknesſes and infirmities of the human conſtitution, there are many peculiar dangers and hazards to which their profeſſion expoſes them. But the reflection, that God is our friend and protector, and that we live in ſuch a manner as to diſpoſe him to favour us; the reflection that our hope is placed beyond and out of the reach of death, and that our immortality is ſecured in the heavens; muſt have a prevailing power and influence upon our minds. It was this reflection which ſupported David under all his troubles; it is this which will uphold us in diſcharging the duties of our reſpective ſtations, in every capacity. It was the reflection of Job, in conſidering his humanity and tenderneſs, and the exerciſes of frienſhip to the diſtreſſed; * “ the bleſſing of him that was
“ ready to periſh came upon me, and I
“ cauſed the widow’s heart to ſing for joy,
“ I put on righteouſneſs and it clothed me;
“ my judgment was as a robe and a dia-
“ dem.” This was a ſource of comfort

* Job xxix. 13, 14.

in his afflictions ; and so will it be to us, if we are attentive to the like practice. Distressed as he was, he has confidence in redemption ; and this disarmed death of its terrors.

WILL not the same reflections fortify your minds against the terrors of death, and deprive it of its sting ? They will. Whatever death shall await us, whether natural or violent ; from the decay of constitution, or from the thunder of an enemy, in the honourable discharge of our duty to our country and our king ; still we are happy in the previous assurances that a glorious eternity awaits all those who serve God ; still we know that God's providence and protection will deliver us from all dangers, till the Almighty FIAT shall be pronounced for our transition into a better state of existence.

God grant that you may all prepare seasonably for such a state, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord !

S E R M O N XIII.

Immoderate Love of Pleasure considered.

2 TIM. III. 4.

LOVERS OF PLEASURES MORE THAN LO-
VERS OF GOD.

EVERY day's experience is sufficient to convince us of the frailty of human nature. Sufficient demonstration of our degeneracy and corruption has at all times appeared from the common irregularity of our appetites and affections. In every age there have been men, who have too sadly verified this observation of the apostle ; men, who, in every sense of the words, it must be acknowledged, have been “ Lovers of pleasures more than “ lovers of God.”

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It would be foreign from my design or intention to enlarge, before the present audience, upon the state and circumstances of that particular age, to which the apostle may seem more immediately to allude in the chapter of the text. Considering these particular words as of universal import, and capable of being extended to every age; I may, without scruple, apply them to the condition and genius of the present times, as well as to those more immediately referred to. Hence their peculiar propriety must be manifest, in the application of them to an audience, whose prevailing and general characteristic affords but too striking a parallel.

ONE very good use of the apostle's observation may be, to shew that there might naturally be expected to arise, even in the times of Christianity, some men, who, together with the practice of many other vices, would be distinguished by this character of being "Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God." The chapter of
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of the text exhibits a large catalogue of other vices likewise, into the commission of which some would unhappily degenerate; but that bias of disposition and temper to the commission of evil, which would be so manifest, could not be attributed to any cause so naturally as this which the text itself affords us. All the evils, into which the more thoughtless part of the community I am addressing, inconsiderately plunge themselves, may peculiarly be considered as the consequences and effects of such a source and origin.

THAT the gospel of Christ, by which every Christian should regulate his conduct, is sufficient to instruct men in the practice of their duty, cannot be denied. It contains every motive and argument to dissuade men from the practice of vice and wickedness, which is consistent with the liberty of free and rational beings. It supplies us with abundant matter to encourage us to the practice of virtue and good works, as well as to discourage us from walking in
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the paths of vice and disobedience. But we are still left to chuse or to refuse, and we may either embrace that which is good, or accept of that which is evil and pernicious.

To this freedom and liberty of choice, I am fully satisfied you will all heartily assent. The idea of freedom to a British seaman, is a very powerful stimulus to the honourable discharge of his duty, when the critical moment for which his country wanted his service is arrived. But if we consider this in a moral view, either as it affects society or more immediately relates to the laws of our Creator; the consequences of the choice we shall make ought to be duly and maturely weighed. Every one is doubtless actuated by the same general motive of procuring happiness, whatever steps he may walk in, or whatever objects of pursuit he may embrace; but all are not equally disposed to consider the necessary requisites for determining that choice, or willing to take sufficient pains
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to satisfy themselves of the effects of their actions. Too many, indeed, resolve to follow the shortest course; totally regardless of the event of things, they only consider what practices have the best tendency to produce present satisfaction. For such dispositions, the study of God and goodness is too refined an employment. They consider the objects of the present world only; and are content with pursuing whatever is calculated to administer to their enjoyments and pleasures here. Such as these the apostle points out to be "Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;" men, who live only for themselves,—who consider the world, as made for the fullest gratification of their sensual appetites, and created only that they may riot in luxury and licentiousness.

NOR is this confined particularly to any one class of people. Neither the highest nor the lowest are exempt from them. Those who have the superfluities of life at command, have many temptations to deviate

viate from the strict line of duty ; and instances have occurred of those in superior stations, who have sometimes abused that power, which the providential dispensation of things in this world has supplied them with. Those again, who are stationed in the inferior departments of life, have frequently been induced to transgress the bounds of their duty, to accomplish some objects, and to attain some ends, from which their poverty had otherwise debarred them.

AN immoderate love of pleasures must be productive of many very serious and alarming evils. Are men in superior or opulent stations of life ? this will tempt them to bias and compel, or at least to influence, many to pursue the same excesses, and to harass and injure others who will not and perhaps cannot proceed in the same track. Or if we consider those of a middle class ; how frequently do the means, with which they are furnished, enable them to indulge in every luxury and sensual gratification which

which their hearts can wish ? But it seldom stops here. The love of pleasures frequently betrays them into difficulties, and occasions distresses ; for which no mode of relief presents itself, but either to defraud others by unjust advantages, or to abuse their candour and benevolence by unfair dealings. And to come to those in the lower stations of life, the love of pleasures is not less prejudicial to their truest interests ; for this often exposes men to the temptation of the most daring acts, that they may obtain the necessary means of accomplishing their desires.

THOUGH I wish not to intimate, that, in the present society, any descriptions of persons are more immediately referred to ; yet, as the subject is in its nature so general, the application must naturally extend to the members of the present community, as well as to others. It must not be dissembled, that seamen often suffer for their inordinate and thoughtless dissipation and extravagance in the season of plenty ; of the

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numerous instances which might be mentioned, I need not call any to your minds, to convince you of the propriety and truth of the remark.

Is the seaman, then, it may be asked, ONLY inconsiderate in the hour of superfluity? Is he ONLY a lover of pleasure, when the means of gratification are so abundantly in his power? This must be a visionary idea; since nothing can be more certain, than THAT want of principle into which he has unhappily degenerated. If, when the means of indulgence in sensual pleasures are liberally dispensed to him, he runs into every excess of riot; his disposition and inclination are manifest, and he is only restrained at other times from committing the same excesses by the hard hand of poverty. It is obvious, that principle has no influence over him; and that common temptations to transgress the laws of equity and right are not weakened by any check or impulse of the mind. In the more flagrant violations of the laws of society, the
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the voice of conscience will usually exert its claim to attention; but its effects on such tempers will often be feeble, and insufficient for any salutary purposes.

Thus exposed to the most dangerous temptations, and unrestrained by any principle of right; how naturally will the love of forbidden pleasures prevail, and induce him to procure the means of enjoyment by unjust practices? For the natural law of the mind, though it may slightly plead to prevent such an evil, will commonly be overpowered by such restless advocates; as they will seldom cease their importunities till they have obtained and effected their purpose. Thus one false step will naturally lead to another; and he, who, in one act of vice, or in one act of luxury, slackens the reins of restraint, may for the same reasons indulge himself in more. Hence commonly ensue distress and embarrassment. Hence, too frequently, arise the temptations which lead him to renounce every principle of honesty and integrity, and pre-

pare him for the worst actions. Into this sad state are those persons in danger of plunging themselves, who are "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;" who consider the gratification of their own irregular and sensual appetites as their chief good; who disregard the calls and intreaties, the commands and threatnings, the promises and exhortations of an almighty God, as well as the frequent and awful warnings of his ministers.

OF such a conduct we have but too many sad and lamentable instances in the world. Amongst seamen, are not the proofs and demonstration too notorious to admit of doubt? Observe their conduct only while on shore, and compare the expences of many at their accustomed places of resort; how do these consist with such supplies as their wages can possibly afford? Are not the temptations to evils multiplied, in proportion to their indulgence in sensual pleasures?

THAT

THAT the mind of man is capable of pleasure, is not only allowed but strenuously contended for. But this is not the sort of pleasure, for which the mind of man was originally fitted and disposed. For sensual pleasure man was not created. It was a rational, manly, and solid pleasure, consisting in the regular and orderly subordination of our faculties to the will and command of our Creator, that we were at first formed and fashioned to enjoy. Hence we plainly mistake the true objects as well as the subjects of pleasure; which brings me to consider some of the causes of our errors.

AND here, I do not mean to discuss at large or to consider fully that irregular bias of mind, which affected our nature in consequence of the fall of our first parents. On such speculative subjects I wish not to expatiate before the present audience; to whom simple facts and plain arguments are much better adapted, and as such, I presume, will be much more easily compre-

hended and understood. To these facts, then, we may have recourse for so many proofs of this irregular disposition. These will more effectually convince the greater part of the persons I am now addressing, than all the specious and metaphysical subtilties which have been exercised on various occasions to illustrate this subject.

CONSIDERING this as the primary cause, one of the principal secondary causes must be attributed to improper instruction, or perhaps a total want of education.

NOTHING can be more obvious, than that the latter case must afford an abundant scope for this irregular bias of the mind. The object of education is to teach mankind to reason justly; and duly to apply that reasoning to the purposes of life, and to the relation we stand in towards our Creator. This will teach us to distinguish between pleasures of a temporary or perishing nature, and those which are durable, permanent, and lasting. Hence the great value

value and importance of education ; hence also the great misfortune of those, whose infancy or youth has not been blessed with this wonderful advantage. Need we wonder, then, that this propensity of a deranged mind should prevail, where present pleasures are exhibited to the view with all their allurements ? Or is it any way surprising that such a disposition should be manifested, where few, if any, means have been exercised, to correct and reform this irregular tendency ?

GENERALLY speaking, we cannot run any great hazard of error, in attributing the prevalence of vice and impiety to a want of education. When persons in their youth, instead of being trained up in the paths of virtue and religion, are left entirely to their own will ; it must be supposed, that, without some very extraordinary favour of Providence, their lives will be the same in their advanced years as in their early days, with the unhappy addition of an increased habit, rendered more invete-

rate from long custom. Is it then to be wondered, that we should so frequently be presented with accounts of violence and outrage, or that we should see so many instances of luxury, of idleness, and extravagance? Can this be unknown to the generality of seamen? Is it a matter to which any of the present assembly are or can be strangers? It cannot be. The fact is notorious to all those who have ever lived in a royal port; and to every attentive person on board a ship of war, nothing can be more plain and demonstrable.

BAD example is another very prevalent source of this propensity to sensual pleasures. And when this concurs, with a want of education, a case which is but too common on board ships of war, the bad effects must naturally be increased. For bad company is epidemical and contagious; and when persons of this cast meet with congenial tempers, which is not difficult in such conditions, indulgence in pleasures will become an effect of consent and agreement.

ment. Iniquity will then be soon converted into a system, for the sake of supporting the pleasures we are speaking of; and when evil practices result from combined counsels, no bounds will be sufficient to restrain such persons, no laws competent to check and prevent them from accomplishing their wicked and diabolical designs.

STILL more malignant is this source of evils, when it is encouraged by the improper behaviour of parents. It is a melancholy reflection, though supported by fatal experience, that so shocking a cause of the progress of vice and wickedness should ever exist; that those, whose duty it is to instil into the tender minds of youth the principles of religion and morality, should be the first to set an example to their offspring of vice and iniquity. Perhaps some of you, to whom I am now speaking, can bear testimony to the truth of these observations; I am certain that many who are on board ships of war, are not greatly indebted to
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their parents, for the care they exercised to cultivate the moral faculties of their children. If such, therefore, are "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God," the cause which has been assigned for it is easy and natural.

INSTANCES are not wanting of persons who have had a liberal education, who have swerved from the paths of integrity and obedience into those of vice and irregularity. Nor do I attempt to deny, that the children of religious and exemplary parents have sometimes degenerated into wickedness and licentiousness; but on this subject, it is needless to enlarge, since it may be attributed almost constantly, if not always, to the influence of bad company.

HAVING thus largely considered the causes of the character in the text, let us now endeavour to draw some practical directions from what has been advanced. To such of you as are destitute of the advantages of education, I wish to administer the

the word of consolation. Your condition is, doubtless, entitled to compassion; and * “where much has *not* been given, “much will *not* be required.” The Almighty † “will not be extreme to mark “what is done amiss,” in ignorance and infirmity; ‡ “the times of this ignorance “God may wink at,” but we have the authority of an inspired writer to declare the conditions on which alone this mercy and compassion will be extended. He “now commandeth all men every where “to repent;” and on these terms only can this act of oblivion be passed. It relates to what is past, and not to what is future. That you have hitherto been ignorant of the duties of a Christian, may not perhaps have been entirely your own fault; but if you now persist, after such admonitions, I cannot promise your safety and happiness. To yourselves must be the consequence of flighting and disre-

* Luke xii. 48.

† Psalm cxxx. 3.

‡ Acts xvii. 30.

garding these gracious overtures of a merciful God ; for he is jealous of his honour, and will assuredly punish the transgressors of his laws. Those who pervert their faculties to the purposes of vice and wickedness, instead of honouring and serving their Creator, must expose themselves to his anger.

Is this, then, the consequence of indulging in forbidden pleasures ? must it not be our greatest wisdom to refrain from practices of so dangerous a tendency ? For by this only can we escape the punishment threatned against sinners, and obtain a title to the rewards which are promised to the righteous.

MAY we all then learn, from the instructive lesson which has now been set before us ! May we regulate our pleasures so as to be innocent, lawful, and commendable ! that our love of them may be no greater than is consistent with that love which we owe to God ; that
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it may be such as to animate our spirits to a more active obedience, and promote and help forward our future and eternal happiness.

S E R M O N

An earnest perswasive to a Life of Modesty.

IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, AT THE CHURCH OF ST. MARTIN, IN THE CITY OF LONDON, ON SUNDAY, THE 11th OF SEPTEMBER, 1741.

WE need not be met with a stronger picture of the nature and design of Christianity, than is contained in the apostle's exhortations. The gospel was not meant to be a burden to men, but to be displayed and diffused for their benefit and improvement of all mankind. It was a testimony which warranted the instruction or conviction of good men, and it is the meaning of the word gospel; and if it were not, and if it were not to be diffused, but to be confined to a few, it would not be sufficient, but by this

it may be such as to irritate our spirits to
a more active obedience, and promote and
help forward our future and eternal hap-
piness.

The pleasure of the world is but a shadow,
and the pleasure of the flesh is but a dream.

It is a pleasure that is but a shadow,
and the pleasure of the flesh is but a dream.

It is a pleasure that is but a shadow,
and the pleasure of the flesh is but a dream.

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and the pleasure of the flesh is but a dream.

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It is a pleasure that is but a shadow,
and the pleasure of the flesh is but a dream.

S E R M O N XIV.

An earnest persuasive to a Life of Morality.

2 COR. IV. 3.

IF OUR GOSPEL BE HID, IT IS HID TO
THEM THAT ARE LOST.

WE need not be presented with a stronger picture of the nature and design of Christianity, than this expression of the apostle exhibits to us. The gospel was not meant to be a hidden treasure; but to be displayed and diffused for the benefit and improvement of all mankind. It was a something which merited the distinction or appellation of good tidings (which is the meaning of the word gospel); and it was so plain and obvious, that it could not be mistaken, but by those only

only whose minds were wholly estranged from every thing which had the appearance of order and regularity.

IT WAS ONE plain and manifest design of the gospel, to rectify the disorderly ideas of those, who had deviated from the natural principles of obedience. To this end are all its precepts and injunctions directed. To rouse our natural consciousness of submission to the will of our Creator, every rational sentiment is exercised. We are there treated as men, who have the powers and faculties of reason at command; as persons who may be stimulated and excited to worthy actions, and capable of restoration from any irregularities, inconsistent with our lasting interests, into which we may have fallen.

THIS, I say, is the general object and character of the gospel. Exceptions, doubtless, are to be met with; and the text itself evidently supposes them. It supposes that on some dispositions, the mild and gentle

gentle spirit of the gospel will fail of its natural effect ; but it implies with equal force, that it can only be on those that are dead to every sensation or principle of obedience to the Almighty. The natural principle of conscience must be wholly subdued, in such as cannot attend to this calm and placid conductor ; or so strangely perverted, from some other contrary and irregular bias, as to have lost all its authority.

HENCE, my friends, you cannot be true to your own nature as men, as reasonable creatures, as the handy-work of God, if you do not reflect on those natural powers which are conferred upon you. I will not now spend time in proving to you the existence of God ; this I have already done on an early occasion, in such a manner, that you cannot possibly doubt of. Peculiarly as seamen, I then demonstrated that you MUST believe the BEING OF A GOD ; that it is a natural principle, engraven on the heart of man, which he cannot shake off, without debasing the dignity of his nature, and dis-

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carding that very image in which he is constituted so like unto his Creator.

To a proper sense of this dignity of your nature I wish to promote and excite your attention. The British seaman is seldom insensible of his consequence in his sphere of life ; it is his chief pride to signalize himself in some gallant atchievement, for the honour of his country. You are seldom lost to the reflection of such manly actions ; they possess your minds at all hours and on all occasions.

BUT this is not the whole object of your attention ; nor is the reward to be reaped from this, a sufficient recompence for your services. Suffer me to repeat it ; the reward to be reaped from such actions, in this confined view, is not a sufficient recompence for your services. I will not at present distress your humanity, by demonstrating at how dear a rate this reward is to be purchased. I will not disturb your feelings, by shewing that this empty honour is

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to be bought with the lives of many of your fellow-creatures. And after all, admitting and granting that you survive this important contest, and victory and conquest reward your exertions ; yet a general approbation is all you can expect, and the utmost recompence can scarcely extend to any special or extraordinary encomiums.

PERMIT me, however, to remove an objection, which may seem to lay against these observations. I am far from wishing to condemn your zeal in the service of your country ; whenever its insulted dignity may require a vindication of its honour. Indulge this principle as much as you please ; let it pervade your thoughts, and operate on your minds, on all occasions ; a better principle you cannot imbibe, nor one that will be of so much importance to you in every occurrence.

YET you seldom suffer it to extend far enough. To a superior fame I am anxious to raise your generous thoughts ; in which

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you

you may be assured of receiving, as individuals, and in your separate capacities, the most ample honours. I am anxious to remind you of that gospel or good tidings, which has been revealed to mankind by the Saviour of the world for their direction and rule of conduct; a gospel which sets before you the most desirable pattern of life and manners, and promises and ensures to those who pursue the precepts it enjoins a reversion of happiness, after this life is ended, to all eternity. To a fame for obedience and conformity to this gospel, I am now to invite you; which cannot be hid from the honest mind, and will not be difficult to the sincere enquirer. For "it is" only "hid to such as are lost;" whose appetites, from indulgence and a prodigal excess of the sensual passions, have withstood all sober cautions and remonstrance.

THE gospel, therefore, exhibits for our encouragement a reversionary reward. Under the pleasing assurances of success in this respect,

spect, and the more so as they are unerring, and founded on the veracity and immutability of that divine Author who cannot infringe the strict line of justice and equity; our recompence of obedience is certain. Though the world may sometimes manifest an unfriendly part; though the private views of individuals may interfere, and the general designs of Providence prevent; and though our best services may not always meet with a proportionable reward in the present life; we are justified in observing, that the season of retribution will come. From the very nature and attributes of God, this event is sure; from his promises and declarations it is rendered still more positive; and he must be an enemy to his own reason, and to those very faculties which God has bestowed upon him, who can hesitate for a moment to acknowledge such an important truth.

Or these leading principles of your nature and condition in life, you cannot therefore be ignorant, unless you are wil-

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fully

fully so. They are ingrafted in the very constitution of man ; and unless you suffer them to be choaked and destroyed by the vanities and follies of the world, or the vicious and corrupt affections of the mind, which as weeds and rubbish over-run the soil, they must continue there. The gospel declares this in express terms. It is the very object and design of it to point out in plain and decisive language, these natural and self-evident truths ; and such a "gospel" cannot "be hid," except "to those who are lost". It requires some labour and time to divest ourselves wholly of these primitive and original ideas ; which are congenial to our nature, and of which we cannot divest ourselves without debasing that nature far below the level of the brute creation.

HAVING proved to you, that the object of the gospel is to divulge and explain, in the most full and satisfactory manner, those simple and unerring ideas, which man possessed in his state of innocence ; I shall
now

now proceed to ask, by what means this glossary or interpretation is to benefit mankind. Permit me to answer, in the words of St. Paul, that as * “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God;” the means and instruments of divulging that interpretation are fully described in *THAT* gospel, with those applications of it which those very persons have made to the state and condition of the various classes of people to whom they had declared it.

WE may trace the existence of ministers, therefore, to a much higher source than to their convenience merely as a civil or political institution. I know that such assertions have been often made with great assurance; but for purposes which the supporters and abettors of them will never acknowledge. On that subject, however, I cannot enlarge at present; it shall suffice to remark for the benefit of many

* Rom. x. 17.

who now hear me, that this device has been invented as a quieting principle to evade farther enquiry. Those who propagate it are thoroughly convinced, that particular investigation must prepare the mind for the admission of the truth of the gospel; all the consequences of such admission must ensue, and the precepts and prohibitions, the admonitions and threatnings, declared as the portion of the obedient or the careless, must be admitted as moral certainties,

FOR, after such arguments, it must be plain and evident, that "if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." To those who will suffer reason to put in a claim, the truths of the gospel can never be hid; they will ever be as * "a burning and shining light, which shine more and more unto the perfect day." Opposition to the gospel must be traced to another source; it must be attributed to the vices

* John v. 35.—Prov. iv. 18.

and corruptions of mankind, which have been introduced and encouraged, in consequence of the bias of human nature, and a propensity to shake off, as it is pretended, the shackles of restraint. May I not appeal to every one of you, whether this motive does not prevail in your mind? Is it not under the notion of liberty, that you suffer yourselves to be led away from the paths of duty?

EVIDENT, as it must be, that I am now supposing an acquired principle of goodness and morality in the earlier stages of life; these effects are considered as the influence of improper counsel and evil example. I need not hesitate in saying, that amongst seamen, this consequence is too fully verified to admit of argument; of such a fact, too notorious to be disputed, every one must be, if he will be impartial, a competent judge.

BUT I must farther suppose, which, as I have often intimated, societies of this kind sufficiently

sufficiently warrant, that education has been a stranger to many of you; that this principle of goodness and morality has never been instilled into your minds. Children of fortune, so far as relates to any advantages of a moral or religious nature; the examples of your cotemporaries, and the violence of your natural passions, have been the only guides of your conduct through life. Brought up to no higher ideas, than those of gratifying and indulging those passions; from whence possibly would you seek for associates and companions, but from those of similar sentiments and opinions? "If," from these causes, "our gospel be hid" from any of the members of this assembly, (and I believe, it may be justifiable to suppose it no uncommon case), "it is" because you "are" "lost," and estranged from those moral principles, which would induce and prevail with you to consider it as an object of your peculiar attention.

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SHALL I then call you happy, in the opportunities you now have of learning those truths, which, in your earlier years, you have not been acquainted with? Through the goodness of Providence, you have the advantage of a minister, to instruct you in the duties of morality and religion, and to remind you of your true state and condition. If, for the reasons produced, you have hitherto been lost, and strangers to the principles of religion; if you have been unacquainted with your true state and condition in life; or if you have never truly, or indeed, seriously considered the nature of God, or the relation in which you stand towards him; it is the minister's duty (and God grant that it may always be his endeavour!) to rouse those latent sparks of reason which you possess, and to open to you new sources of pleasure and delight, infinitely surpassing, when once thoroughly understood, all the temporary and perishing enjoyments of the senses. For sensual passions must either leave you, or you will prematurely be deprived

prived of them ; but moral and intellectual delights, and those gratifications of your rational nature, which the man of God will display to you, will ever be increasing and improving.

THE possibility, however, of an easy mistake, into which such a mind may fall, on its first dawning to the blessings of a rational enjoyment, leads me to observe, that the truth or the success of the gospel, does not depend upon the talents or abilities of the person who declares the terms of it. It must not be supposed that all ministers are endued with the same natural powers or acquired endowments ; or that all will exert themselves equally to improve their knowledge of things moral and divine. Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but it is * “ God who giveth “ the increase ;” yet, to your comfort and encouragement I shall add, he never withholds his blessings from the willing mind.

* 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.

The gospel will never be a hid treasure to a man of sincere and upright intentions, whatever may be the powers or qualifications of the preacher; it must and will ever have its due effect and influence on the honest and upright disposition. From such only who will not seriously and heartily believe it, can such a valuable privilege meet with opposition.

THE corrupt and evil practices of mankind are the source, from which we must trace the sole cause of all the opposition which the gospel has met with. Men of upright minds assent to it most readily. The crimes of mankind are the grand obstacle to the progress of Christianity in the hearts of men; and every specious excuse is thought of to extenuate those crimes and to palliate those transgressions, rather than to acknowledge candidly and honestly their disagreeable effects. But I must hasten towards a conclusion.

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ARE we certain, then, that the promises of the gospel shall be made good to those, who, * “ by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and “immortality?” what greater cause need we for our comfort and encouragement to holiness and perseverance in goodness? what more powerful arguments can we want to induce us to reformation, and to make us better men and better Christians? Is it possible that we should entertain a firm persuasion and belief of these things, and neglect the † “great salvation” which is so freely offered to us in the gospel?

LET me then press upon your minds a few important questions; I beg that you will endeavour to answer them impartially. What is happiness? What is salvation? What is eternity? Is the way of life which I pursue calculated to insure them? Have I ever thought them worthy of my acceptance? or will my present temper and disposition consist with a state of felicity hereafter? These,

* Rom. ii. 7.

† Heb. ii. 3.

my friends, are awful questions ; and involve in them the most serious consequences. What then, I again ask of you, will be the result of your disregarding those laws, which the Almighty has prescribed for the conduct of his people ? Is it to be driven from the presence of God for ever ? How awful the thought ! my blood runs cold at the chilling sound. Let me, may each of you say, and I am sure it is your duty to say it ;—let me lose all my friends here, and even * “ pluck out my right eye, “ or cut off my right hand,” if they are obstacles to my happiness, so I may but gain heaven at last.

MAY the word of the gospel, now spoken unto you, be productive of its due effect ! May your stony hearts be softened and opened, to receive the seed which has now been sown for your benefit ! May it take deep root in your minds, as in a kindly soil, and spring up in the good conduct of your

* Mat. v. 29, 30.

lives and actions! Then will it flourish and increase abundantly, till it becomes a goodly harvest; so will our heavenly Redeemer, at the proper season, gather up the † “sheaves into his bosom,” there to preserve them in everlasting bliss.

† Psalm cxxvi. 6.

S E R M O N XV.

The Wonders of the solar System displayed.

PSALM VIII. 3.

FOR I WILL CONSIDER THY HEAVENS,
EVEN THE WORKS OF THY FINGERS;
THE MOON AND THE STARS WHICH
THOU HAST ORDAINED.

TO the seaman, for whose advantage and instruction these Discourses have been more immediately calculated, this sublime subject must be a matter of astonishment and wonder. He is surprized, whenever the moment of reflection overtakes him; and he wonders at the various phœnomena of nature, without knowing more, generally speaking, than the simple facts, of which his senses give him the fullest demonstration.

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IN considering the heavens, the subject pointed out by the author of this psalm, the singular œconomy and pleasing order of the different bodies which appear in them are matters of notoriety and certainty. The sun, and moon, and stars, proceed in a regular and constant course, without deviation or exception. Whence, then, is it that this œconomy and order are uniformly the same? that they are never disturbed? Is it not by virtue of some law or rule originally impressed upon those bodies at their first formation? For what is there so very remarkable in the matter of which they are compounded, that can justify our application of their known effects to any existing cause in themselves? If we may form a rational argument from the nature of things in this habitable world, in which we are stationed (and that is all which any person can form, without the aid of scripture and divine revelation?) there is no sanction or authority whatever for our attributing them to such an origin? They are certain consequences of that original

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FIAT, and of that primitive and omnipotent will of the Creator, who made them for those particular purposes ; * “ to rule over “ the day, and over the night, and to di- “ vide the light from the darkness.”

ONE of the first objects which strikes the seaman's observation, is, the knowledge of the tides. But do not these evidently and visibly change, according to the state and age of the MOON ? I have alluded already to this argument, as peculiarly important to the seaman ; on which occasion it was sufficiently intimated, that a future opportunity should be embraced to speak to it more particularly. Is it not, I proceed therefore to ask, a known fact, that at the appearances or non-appearances of that luminary, usually called the full and change, the time of the highest tides is invariably at the same hour ? Is it not certain that the intermediate times nearly deviate from these particular times, so as to happen at

* Gen. i. 18.

the other hours, with a certainty, according to the number of days from either of those phœnomena? May we not in this place pertinently quote the observation of an inspired authority, who perhaps had little natural knowledge of those things, with which in the present day every seaman is and must be acquainted? † “He,” that is, the Almighty, “appointed the moon, for certain seasons, and the sun knoweth his going down.” In this knowledge the seaman, even if destitute of education, is more fully acquainted; and can better describe the effects of these luminaries, than the most intelligent and improved capacities of ancient times.

FROM daily observations of matters of fact, it is certain that the tides invariably depend on the influence and attraction of the two principal luminaries of heaven. It may be asked how bodies apparently so small can operate upon the bulk of waters

† Psalm civ. 19.

in our seas, of so many thousand miles in extent. Admitting also that their distance is as great as learned men pretend it is, it may be a matter equally astonishing, how these effects can be caused? But daily experience assures us, that they are caused; and reason must convince us, that an origin proportioned to such effects must somewhere exist. Happily we are presented with the authority of scripture, which fully corroborates the testimony of reason; it asserts that the Almighty hath * “set
“ bounds” to the waters “ which they
“ cannot pass, neither turn again to cover
“ the earth.” On this authority alone the faithful Christian will find no difficulty in assenting to this natural and plain truth, though he has never seen the sea; and can the seaman doubt of it, to whom the effects of this law are familiar? or does that familiarity destroy his faith and confidence in God’s veracity, in matters which others solely believe on the authority of God and by the report of their fellow creatures?

* Psalm civ. 9.

It is hard to admit a supposition of this nature, though matter of fact will almost declare for it. Our Saviour's assertion should, in this case, however, be considered very attentively; † "blessed are they which
"have not seen, and yet have believed."

PHILOSOPHICAL enquiries into the nature of these things I mean not at present to trouble you with. If they shall be found to correspond with the operations, of which we daily see the effects; it is an additional instance, I might have said, a still more convincing demonstration of that consummate wisdom, which at first endued inanimate bodies with these wonderful properties. This enlarges our views, and extends our prospects more fully; it exhibits to us a more spacious scene of things, and our minds are expanded to entertain more lofty ideas of the transcendent Author of such a surprizing œconomy. It was this reflection, which induced an inspired writer

† John xx. 29.

to exclaim, † “ O Lord, how manifold
“ are thy works ! in wisdom hast thou
“ made them all. The earth is FULL of
“ thy riches. So is the great and wide sea
“ also ; wherein are things creeping in-
“ numerable, both small and great beasts.
“ There go the ships ; and there is that
“ leviathan, whom thou hast made to take
“ his pastime therein. These wait all
“ upon thee ; and thou givest them their
“ meat in due season.”

THE laws of nature, therefore, are determined ; and every deviation from those laws is considered as an unusual phenomenon, which has always been distinguished by some extraordinary name. In our language it obtains the name of a miracle ; which always implies something contrary to the general and established course of nature. But the Author of nature ALONE can do this. He who alone formed and fashioned, I do not say the present world

† Psalm civ. 24,---27.

only which we inhabit (for that is a very groveling and confined idea), but the system of worlds around us; can controul or divert the operation of those laws, by which this system is preserved and regulated. Neither are these interruptions of nature very frequently exercised, but only on special and interesting occasions. Those only of Moses in the Old Testament, and of our Saviour and his apostles in the New, can have any claim to the character of general miracles; but considering each of them as the founders of a new religion, the object of these more extensive delegated powers (for even these were done by divine authority) was sufficiently momentous to justify, on rational principles, this extraordinary exertion of supernatural powers. Of particular miracles, exercised only for particular purposes, they are far from being so numerous, as to encourage any presumptuous confidence; and afford no ground for any exercise of them, but only on the most extraordinary occasions.

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THESE observations have been related to shew, that as the use of miracles is very limited, their exercise can furnish no reason to the wicked, to hope for them with a view to reformation. Such persons must be very improper, because they are unworthy, subjects of such great and distinguished favours. Let none, therefore, deceive themselves with such soothing and quieting notions, which can only tend to their delusion and ruin ; for * “ God is not ” and will not be “ mocked,” but “ whatsoever a “ man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

BUT to return from this short digression, which cannot, strictly speaking, be considered as a digression ; because its object has been to establish the general uniformity and correspondence of the Almighty’s laws. It is a known fact, that the times of the fullest seas, usually called *high-water*, are constantly determined by the passage of the moon in particular over the meridian of

* Gal. vi. 7.

any place ; and this holds invariably true, whether such transit be visible or invisible, and whether it be to the north or south of us. Yet the quantity of water does not entirely depend on the influence of the moon, but is determined by the relative situation of the sun. These are circumstances which matters of fact sufficiently demonstrate. The tides, at the times which solely are determined by the moon, are not always of the same height ; but they are sometimes higher, and sometimes lower, as these two bodies act in concert with, or in opposition to each other. If their attraction is jointly the same way, the accumulation of waters will be greater ; but if they partially destroy the effects of each other's attraction, that accumulation must certainly be less. Just so it is in fact. At the new and full moon, the sun's attraction is the same way with her's ; but at the first and last quarter, they are at as great a distance from each other in the attractive influence as possible. Hence the tides in the former cases are as the sum of the powers

powers of the sun and moon ; in the latter, only as the difference of those powers.

FROM these observations also, the proportional attraction and influence of these powers on the waters of the seas may be readily deduced. And as the times of high water invariably follow the course of the MOON, the superior influence must be attributed to that luminary. To the SUN, therefore, we must attribute the rest ; because the other planets, though doubtless possessing attractive powers, are too small or too distant to produce any very considerable effects. Stating, then, the rise of spring tides at some particular and open headland to be fifteen feet, that rise at quarter or neap tides will be little more than nine feet ; but one tenth more than half the former. And as the SUN in the former case acted jointly with the MOON, and in the latter case contrary to her ; half of this difference must be assigned to the influence of the sun, and this influence must be fixed at about three feet, whilst that of the moon

moon is about twelve feet. I am now addressing myself to persons, who know that, in calm and uninterrupted seasons, these observations are nearly such as they occur. It is also known, that in some seas no tides are found, but constant currents only ; that in others the tides are small, being only a few feet ; that, again, in other places, tides of thirty feet or more have been remarked ; but in all these cases, local considerations must be applied for the solution of such various phænomena. The general principle still remains unshaken ; and is far beyond all controversy.

THUS have we considered the natural and orderly effects of the two great luminaries of heaven upon the waters of our ocean. And from hence we find abundant reason to exclaim with the psalmist ; when
“ I consider thy heavens, even the works
“ of thy fingers, the moon and the stars
“ which thou hast ordained,—what is man,
“ that thou art” thus “ mindful of him,
and

“and the son of man that thou” thus
“vifiteft him?”

You will not think it improper to extend this fubject more fully ; and from hence to mention a few aftonifhing particulars relative to this fyftem of worlds, of which we form fo conspicuous a part. To gentlemen, who have traversed and explored the paths of fcience, thefe furprifing declarations will be familiar ; perhaps, however, to fome of my prefent audience, for reafons which have heretofore been copioufly afigned, a recital of them may ferve to expand the mind, and to augment the ideas of the wonders of creation.

FROM principles of fcience, demonftrable from reafon and experiment, the magnitude and diftance of the heavenly bodies are very eafily afcertained. In this affertion, I am not fpeaking the language of conjecture, but of fact ; which is well known to fcientific minds, whofe labours have explored and determined the certainty of thefe things.

things. The moon's extraordinary influence on the waters of the ocean, of which I have just spoken, is occasioned by her proximity to our earth ; and yet her situation is sufficiently distant to counteract the effects of her attraction by the earth, of which she is the constant attendant. Small and diminutive as she appears to us in her utmost splendor, yet her distance is two hundred and forty thousand miles, and her diameter two thousand one hundred and seventy-five. Astonishing this to an uninformed mind ! but not more astonishing than true.

KNOWING, as we do, that the earth's diameter is near eight thousand * geographical miles, her attractive influence on the waters

* It may be proper here to distinguish between a geographical and a nautical mile ; for of the latter sort there are only 60 to a degree of latitude, but near 70 of the former. I need not here remind the intelligent seaman, that the nautical miles contained in a degree of longitude are variable, being in no two places exactly the same, but in parallels equally distant from the equator, one in north, and the other in south latitude.

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of the moon must be in proportion to her quantity of matter, or near fifty times as great as the moon's influence upon the earth. But this, probably, would operate so violently as to dismember the planet; and the God of nature has sufficiently counteracted this, by diminishing her velocity round her axis, and making her day equal to the time betwixt one new moon and another. Thus the equilibrium or balance of nature is preserved; and the wisdom of Omnipotence every way manifested.

BUT farther, let us proceed to the grand luminary of our whole system, the SUN. From the same principles as before, his distance from our earth is not less than ninety-five millions of miles, and his diameter more than nine hundred thousand miles. Hence, from his vast magnitude, notwithstanding his distance, arises his attractive influence on the waters of the ocean, as I have already declared. Well then might the psalmist be induced to cry out in the remarkable

able words following the text, as they have been just now related.

YET of this wonderful and astonishing system have we only given a very small account. Should I proceed to enlarge on the various affections of the superior planets of our system, to say nothing of the inferior ones, of which that which usually bears the name of the *morning* and *evening star*, is worthy of particular notice; it would almost surpass belief. It shall suffice to say, that the planet next in distance from the sun to our earth, is an hundred and forty five millions of miles; but his bulk is not quite one third of the earth's magnitude, and therefore he can have no perceptible influence on our tides. The magnitude of Jupiter, though more than one thousand times the bulk of the earth, is but one thousandth part of the bulk of the sun, besides being more than five times the distance; a sufficient cause that it can have no visible attractive influence on our earth.

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OF SATURN, too, it may be remarked, that besides being considerably less in bulk than Jupiter, he is removed to almost twice the distance from the sun ; and the new planet, or Georgium Sidus, besides being twice the distance of Saturn, is not more than one tenth part of his magnitude. For these reasons, it is evident, that the sun and moon only can have any influence on the tides of our ocean*. The fixed stars also, which are supposed to be so many suns, and centres of similar systems of worlds to that of which our earth is a part, are at amazing distances, and appear only in our atmosphere as so many glittering points in the heavens.

CAN the rational mind reflect on these astonishing works of nature, and be inatten-

* It is obvious that I have not noticed the four moons of Jupiter, the seven moons of Saturn, nor the two moons of the Georgian planet, for which last, with the two additional moons of Saturn, we are indebted to the surprising genius and mechanical abilities of the renowned Herschell ; since, if their primaries have no influence on the tides of our earth, these secondaries evidently can have no pretensions to it.

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tive to its omnipotent Author and Founder? What an amazing field of wonders is here displayed to our view. May we not here adopt the words of the psalmist? Have we not demonstrated, that † “the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work?” Is not the assertion of the same inspired writer fully verified? Is it not evident, that he must be ‡ “a fool, who can say in his heart, there is no God?” Seamen have so many astonishing and amazing proofs of this great and fundamental article of faith, that they must acknowledge it; nay more, they must proclaim it before the world, if they have a single spark of gratitude for the numerous blessings they have received from his bountiful hand. They must and will proclaim it in their lives and actions; they will proclaim it in their exemplary conduct and demeanor; they will proclaim it in the exercises of adoration and obedience to God, in the displays of justice

† Psalm xix. 1.

‡ Psalm xiv. 1.

and equity to their fellow-creatures, in the habits of sobriety, temperance, chastity, and in being * “ the temples of the Holy “ Ghost.”

UNHAPPILY, however, the conduct of many seamen is of a very different complexion. But, my friends, I have described to you the wonderful laws and properties of the distant and heavenly bodies ;— that you may from thence be taught to fear the divine and omnipotent Power, which could at first form and fashion such astonishing orbs, and prescribe to them such amazing laws for their preservation and continuance. Call to mind also the laws he has ordained for your moral conduct ; that you may preserve that image and likeness of God himself, in which you are created ; for it is only by your preservation of that image that you can be entitled to an entrance into happiness after this life is ended. Adore, then, the goodness and mercy of God, but do not abuse them. † “ Ex-

* 1 Cor. vi. 19.

† Heb. iii. 13.

“hort one another daily while it is called
“to day, lest any of you be hardened thro’
“the deceitfulness of sin.” May we all
then learn to admire, to praise, and to bless
God for his mercies, for the sake of Jesus
Christ our Lord!

S E R M O N XVI.

Storms and Tempests under the controuling Power of God.

PSALM CXLVIII. 8.

WIND AND STORM FULFILLING HIS
WORD.

THIS is a subject of the utmost importance to seamen of every description and denomination. The records of past ages, and the histories of ancient times, assure us, that the more remarkable bodies of creation are subject to the laws of their Creator;—they do more,—for they declare to us, that it is he who setteth up, and who pulleth down the most flourishing kingdoms, and the most splendid empires. Farther still, they demonstrate that the minuter parts of matter, of whatever

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species, are subject to the controul and superintendence of the Almighty; and each, in their respective states, proclaim their obedience and submission to his will.

THE author of this psalm calls upon the people of God to celebrate his praises, and to extol his magnificence. It may be of use to repeat the verses preceding the text, to shew with what energy and zeal he requires both celestial and terrestrial beings, both animate and inanimate, to coincide with his sentiments, and to declare their Maker's glory. " O praise the Lord of
" heaven; praise him in the height. Praise
" him all ye angels of his; praise him, all
" his host. Praise him, sun and moon;
" praise him, all ye stars and light. Praise
" him, all ye heavens; and ye waters,
" that are above the heavens. Let them
" praise the name of the Lord; for he
" spake the word, and they were made;
" he commanded, and they were created.
" He hath made them fast for ever and
" ever;

“ ever ; he hath given them a law, which
“ shall not be broken.”

HAVING thus specified his reasons for invoking the celestial beings and æthereal orbs, and, by an elegant figure, personified inanimate matter, to celebrate the praise of the divine architect ; he proceeds in the same rapturous strain to interest every part of creation, however distinguished or debased, the loftiest dignities and the meanest reptiles, in a most sublime apostrophe.

“ Praise the Lord upon earth ; ye dragons,
“ and all deeps ; fire and hail ; snow and
“ vapours ; wind and storm fulfilling his
“ word ; mountains and all hills ; fruit-
“ ful trees, and all cedars ; beasts, and
“ all cattle ; worms and feathered fowls ;
“ kings of the earth, and all people ;
“ princes and all judges of the world ;
“ young men and maidens ; old men
“ and children, praise the name of the
“ Lord ; for his name only is excellent,
“ and his praise above heaven and earth.
“ He shall exalt the horn of his people ;”

264 *Storms and Tempests under the*

and for this reason "all his saints shall
" praise him ; even the children of Israel,
" even the people that serveth him."

FULLY has it been demonstrated on a
* late occasion, that the sun and moon
and heavenly orbs abundantly testify their
obedience to those laws, to which their Al-
mighty Creator subjected them at their
first formation. We have there seen with
what amazing foresight and consummate
wisdom the divine Being hath established
and regulated every part of our system.
It appears also from authority, too im-
portant to be contradicted, that inanimate
matter, in a less settled and permanent
state, is entirely subservient to the omni-
potent and omniscient will of Heaven. Even
the " wind and storm," as the text ob-
serves to us, " fulfil his word ;" the most
fluctuating elements and particles of matter,
however inconstant and changeable, are

* See the Sermon immediately preceding.

obedient

obedient to his mandate, and entirely submissive to his controul.

To seamen, who are peculiarly concerned in the effects of winds and storms, it must be in the highest degree momentous and interesting, that this subject should be clearly and plainly investigated. Inattentive, too frequently, to the great Author of all these scenes of nature, which involve in their operations the most awful consequences, they seldom look farther than to the immediate effects. It is to rouse your attention to the God of nature, that I have more especially selected this subject to discourse upon at present; for if the very "winds and storms fulfil his word," and are the instruments of his providential dispensations, must not the seaman be grossly culpable, who inconsiderately turns his back upon those peculiar motives to submission and obedience which are hereby afforded him.

SHOULD

SHOULD I recount at large the numerous instances of this species of wonderful and extraordinary events, which occur in history, and from thence deduce such reflections for our present purpose as would naturally follow; it is more than probable, I should stagger your faith and confidence. Certain I am, that it would far exceed the limits to which I must unavoidably confine myself on this occasion. One singular instance, however, I cannot so readily pass over; it is peculiarly important and truly awful, and as such demands the most earnest attention. To many of you, I am persuaded, it can scarcely be unknown; and it is very probable, that whilst I am thus introducing the subject, many of you will anticipate my meaning. Need I tell you, then, that I allude to that dreadful and astonishing storm which decided the fate of so many gallant officers and men, and proved the destruction of so many floating castles and bulwarks? need I mention expressly that*
 unfortunate

* This unfortunate fleet left Jamaica, July 25th 1782, consisting of the *Ville de Paris* of 104 guns,
 Le

unfortunate squadron of ships, which were on their passage home from the West Indies, a few months after the ever memorable engagement of the last war in that quarter of the globe. There were few officers in the service, and perhaps not many seamen, at that time, who were unconcerned with that serious event; few who had not occasion to deplore the fate of some near relation, or to mourn over the loss of some amiable friend. After escaping so many whistling messengers of death, in that decisive day of trial, to be reserved for the trying scene of meeting a watery grave from the horrors of a tempest, is a melancholy consideration.

Le Glorieux, Le Hector, Centaur, Ramillies, and Canada, of 74 guns each (of which the last only arrived safe,) Le Caton of 64, and Pallas of 36, which had been ordered to Halifax above a week before the gale commenced. They had near 100 sail of merchantmen under convoy. Admiral Thomas Graves continued four nights in the Ramillies after the gale begun, and only at the last extremity, on the morning of Sept. 21, left her in a small leaky boat, and escaped on board a merchantman, one of his convoy; as did all the crew on board that and other ships.

FROM

FROM this reference to such a calamity, as a forcible illustration of the declaration of the text, it may be proper and expedient to produce some reasons, which may be deduced from the circumstances of this sad catastrophe. This will oblige me to recapitulate the history of the times, so far as it shall have a tendency to represent this subject in a striking point of view.

THE events of that memorable day, to which we have alluded, had fired the minds of Britons with a spirit of ambition, very inconsistent with that state and condition, and those serious apprehensions, which before that period they had very great reason to entertain. It might perhaps be necessary to curb and subdue that spirit. They might, and probably were tempted to attribute it to the secondary, rather than the primary cause. It was considered as the effect of good fortune; as a lucky incident; indeed it was referred to any thing rather than to the providence of God.

It

It was the manifest design of those numerous hosts of foes, with which we were then beset, to extirpate us as a nation ; or at least to humble our consequence as a people, by depriving us seriously of the sources of our national prosperity. But this scheme was inconsistent with the Almighty's providential will ; and he therefore interposed to prevent this disastrous event. It was not compatible with his government of the world to permit it. As a nation, we had risen, it is true, to a high pitch of pride, voluptuousness, sensuality, and every species of luxury, but we were not yet destitute of the * “scape goat, wherewith
“to make an atonement ;” still there remained † “ten righteous persons” to avert the punishment due to our transgressions. Here then we may adopt the language of the psalmist, and say with peculiar propriety, ‡ “they had laid a net for our feet,
“and pressed down *our* soul ; they had
“dug a pit before *us*, and fell into the

* Lev. xvi. 20—28.

† Gen. xviii. 32.

‡ Psalm lvii. 7.

“ midst

“ midst of it themselves.” Good reason had we also, as well as Israel, to declare, that * “ if the Lord himself had not been
 “ on our side, when men rose up against
 “ us; they had swallowed us up quick.”

I HAVE said enough to shew, that I am far from desirous of justifying our own conduct and obedience to the Almighty, as a nation; it could not be justified upon any moral principles whatever. Neither do I mean to stigmatize the character of other nations, who were then combined and in enmity against us. But the caution which the Almighty particularly gave the Israelites, will be an excellent rule of conduct on all similar occasions; † “ Beware
 “ that thou provoke not the Lord thy God,
 “ saying, For my righteousness the Lord
 “ brought me in to possess this land, but
 “ for the wickedness of these nations, the
 “ Lord drove them out from before you.” Hence we may account for the favourable interposition of Providence, to prevent the

* Psalm cxxiv. 1, 2. † Deut. viii. 11.—ix. 4, 5, 6.
 projected

projected destruction of our nation ; hence were the divine protection and goodness vouchsafed to succour us in our necessity, and to deliver us from the devouring jaws of those who were united to overwhelm us.

Thus supported * “ in the day of our “ trouble, and thus upheld” by the Author of our Being ; what songs of gratitude ought we not, as a people, to pour out unto God for his wonderful dealings towards us ? It was our duty ; it was our interest ; but, I ask, was it our practice ? Is it not notorious, that a conduct directly opposite was extremely prevalent ? Did not licentiousness, immorality, profaneness, and a species of practical atheism, manifest themselves every where ? Were not the most solemn and sacred exercises of religion every where scoffed at and derided ? When, by the highest human authority, which we, as Britons, acknowledge, in imitation of † good Jehoshaphat, on a simi-

* Psalm. xviii. 18.

† 2 Chron. xx. 3.

lar occasion, repeated annual fasts were proclaimed; was it not a custom to turn them into ridicule, and to pervert the benevolent designs of a gracious monarch to the purposes of dissipation, not to say, disloyalty?

BUT there was something, it should seem, in a national view, fundamentally, or at least generally, faulty in the demeanour of those who were then combined in acts of hostility against us. When the prospects of our enemies were therefore elevated to the highest pitch, and success seemed certain and inevitable; when the clamours and acclamations of some amongst ourselves were loud and importunate, and the minds of the best agitated and disturbed between their hopes and their fears; that Almighty Being, who can command the elements, and controul the hearts of the children of men, changed the tide of popular opinion by a decisive turn of providence. For though * “ there may be many devices

* Prov. xix. 21.

“ in a man’s heart ; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand ;” his unerring judgment, who sees the various tendencies of communities and empires in general, and disposes them according to his own will, can and does direct and influence the whole.

HAVING thus enlarged on the primary cause, the probable motive, and the known event of that memorable day, preparatory to my designed illustration of the words of the text,—in which, too, it is recorded as a fact, that the variable and inconstant element of the wind, as a secondary cause, had very great influence, and therefore in that sense is a pertinent instance of it ; permit me now to advert to that serious disaster which succeeded within a few months. On this view of the subject, I have no scruple in declaring, that it may be considered, in a moral and providential view, as a heavy punishment for our transgressions. For nothing can be more demonstrable than this,—that we did not

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make

make a right use, as a nation, of the victory which Providence had decreed for us. This event, though a signal act of divine interposition, did not excite us to that grateful conduct, which, in a serious and moral view, it was naturally adapted to produce. Some particulars, in which our conduct was offensive to the Almighty, I have briefly touched upon already ; but I may present you with some others of great weight and importance. Of that event it is notorious, that whilst some were exercised in extolling the agent, and making invidious comparisons, others were employed in detracting from the brilliancy and valour of the atchievement ; but the far greater part amongst all descriptions of persons were inattentive to the original author of it. I wish to recal your memory to matters of fact, and to reason from events and the known and established rules of the Almighty's providential dispensations to nations and kingdoms ; and from thence I shall endeavour to deduce such important and interesting conclusions,

as

as a matter of such magnitude seems to demand from us.

SINGULAR as was this instance of our delivery, in which Providence seems to have been so strongly engaged ; when that object, for which it was exercised, had been effected, it could not be necessary that such extraordinary manifestations of God's interposing favour should be continued. By this signal turn of affairs, the ambition of one nation was sufficiently curbed, and the preservation of the other provided for. But the consequences of this event were in some measure to depend on their respective future conduct ; and, unless some particular causes occurred in the manner in which they severally received the intelligence of such event, it seemed probable that the future aspect of affairs depended on the natural course of things. For though we are ready to admit, in extraordinary cases, that * “ the race is not to the

* Eccles. ix. 11.

276 *Storms and Tempests under the*

“ swift, nor the battle to the strong, nei-
“ ther yet bread to the wise, nor riches
“ to men of understanding, nor yet fa-
“ vour to men of skill; but that time
“ and chance,” regulated by the con-
trouling and interposing providence of the
Almighty, “ happeneth to them all ;”
yet in the ordinary progress of affairs, the
case is otherwise, and we must be careful
not to confound the common operations of
the divine wisdom with the peculiar and
unusual dispensations of God’s superintend-
ance and government of the world.

NATIONAL offences must and will, in
the very nature of things, ever be produc-
tive of national punishments. The history
of the times to which I have so clearly al-
luded, is a convincing illustration of it.
Deductions from scripture are decisive to
this effect. Are there any here present of
the fatal opinion of those Jews, who met
with so severe a reproof from our Saviour,
for their partial and selfish inferences from
the calamities of others? Were there not
many

many of this description amongst the people of our nation, subsequent to that memorable event to which we have been referring? It is worthy of our notice, and ought to be repeated. * “ Suppose ye, that these “ Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, were sinners “ above all the Galileans, because they “ suffered such things ?” The answer demands our most serious attention ; “ I tell “ you, nay, but except ye repent, ye shall “ all likewise perish.” And in order to enforce it the more strongly upon the mind, he mentions a second instance, of such punishment upon some of their own people ; which he concludes with a repetition of the same words, to manifest the impartiality of Providence, and indirectly to declare a truth which was afterwards more fully communicated to mankind, † “ that “ God is no respecter of persons, “ but that in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, “ is accepted with him ” For thus he

* Luke xiii. 1—3.

† Acts x. 34, 35.

relates the other instance, and by so doing in effect argues to this purpose ; if the example already displayed will not satisfy you, considering your prejudices, because it concerns the Gentiles only, as you may imagine, I will appeal to another occurrence, to the propriety of which you can have no reasonable objection, * “ Or those
 “ eighteen, upon whom the tower in
 “ Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye
 “ that they were sinners above all that
 “ dwelled in Jerusalem ? I tell you, nay,
 “ but except ye repent, ye shall all like-
 “ wise perish.”

DID the people of this nation repent, after the signal instance of divine interposition, to which I am constantly alluding ? Did this wonderful event, or the reflection of the danger we had so lately escaped, produce any reformation of life or conversation ? Did we ever consider that “ to
 “ his mercies, not to our merits,” we

* Luke xiii. 4, 5.

were indebted for this great goodness? Did we not consider our enemies as the only offenders in the sight of heaven? Did we bestow so much as one thought upon our own immoralities, or restrain one single folly of licentious speech, or check and prevent one improper action? No. No. It is manifest that nothing of this was effected; nothing was thought of less than the necessity of reformation.

THOUGHTLESS and inconsiderate as we then manifested ourselves, it could not be supposed that the Almighty was equally regardless; his honour was concerned, and his goodness despised, or at least unattended to. Punishment, therefore, was necessary to bring us to our sober senses; the elements were summoned to be the executioners of his wrath, and to rouse and awaken us from our intoxicated state. Alas! how shall I describe it? that so many of those astonishing monuments and proofs of this interposing and providential goodness to us, should be the objects of this punishment, is an awful consideration.

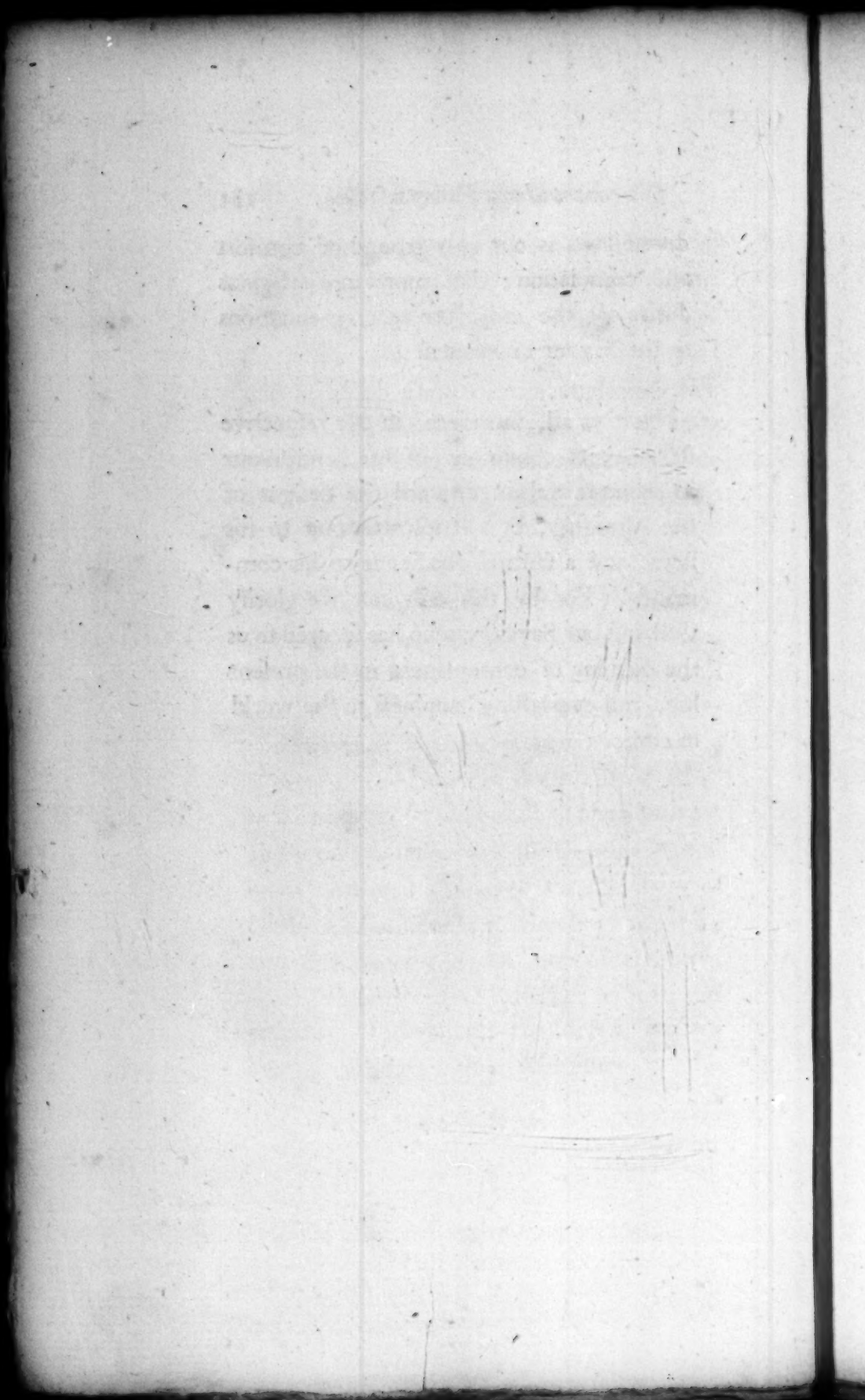
Fancy to yourselves the dreadful state of these bulwarks, and of their numerous inhabitants,---of which the greater part became the victims of one general wreck ; and spare, O spare me the unpleasing task of repeating the sad relation. I will draw a veil over the dismal catastrophe, and close this discourse with a brief address to the present assembly.

HAS it not been sufficiently demonstrated, that even the “ wind and storm “ fulfil the word” of the Almighty ? All nature is subservient to its divine Author ; and becomes * “ the favour of life unto “ life, or the favour of death unto death,” as it receives its commission from heaven. But we have seen, that these things depend on our national character for the love of truth and obedience to the laws of God ; and sometimes also, on our comparative character with respect to other nations and empires. Individually considered, we are hereby assured, that submission to the

* 2 Cor. ii, 16.

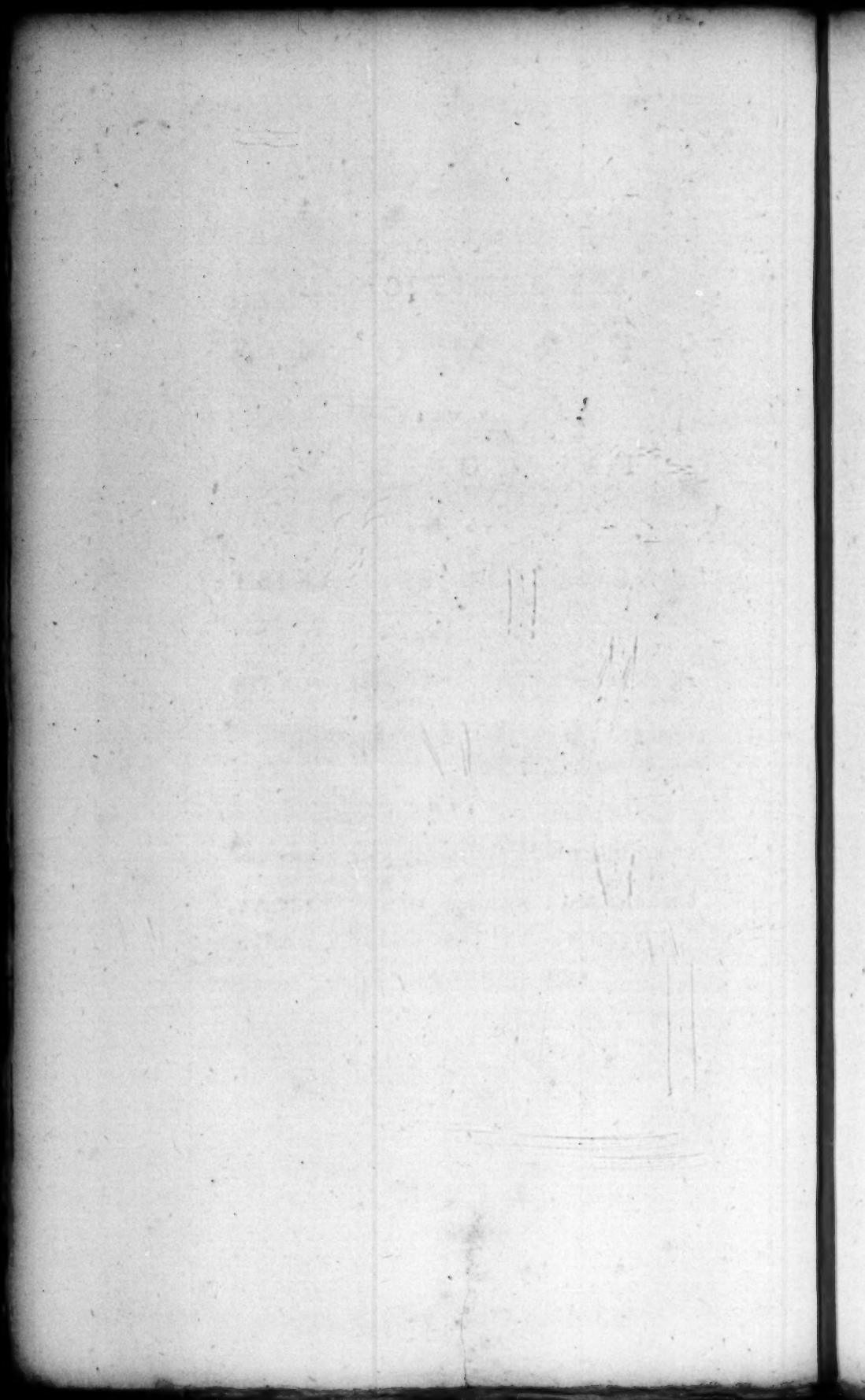
divine laws is our only ground of comfort and consolation ; that moral and religious duties are the only sure recommendations to the favour of heaven.

LET us all, therefore, in our respective stations and conditions of life, endeavour to promote and set forward the designs of the Almighty, by a strict attention to his laws, and a faithful obedience to his commands. For by this only can we glorify God and our Saviour ; who has secured to us the sources of contentment in the present life, and everlasting happiness in the world to come.



SIX ADDITIONAL
S E R M O N S
ON THE
FALL OF MAN,
AND HIS
REDEMPTION BY CHRIST;
CONTAINING
AN INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE UPON THE
F A L L,
WITH
Select Discourses on the following Anniversaries, viz.
CHRISTMAS DAY, GOOD FRIDAY,
EASTER DAY, ASCENSION DAY,
AND WHIT-SUNDAY.

By the same AUTHOR.



S E R M O N I.

On the Fall of Man, and its Effects.

PREACHED THE SUNDAY BEFORE CHRIST-
MAS DAY.

ROM. V. 12.

BY ONE MAN SIN ENTERED INTO THE
WORLD, AND DEATH BY SIN; AND SO
DEATH PASSED UPON ALL MEN.

ON a subject, in which our dearest and most important interests and concerns are manifestly engaged, it is of very serious consideration, that we rightly and clearly form and arrange our ideas; and that those ideas be consistent with pure and unbiaſſed reason, and correspondent to the nature and attributes of God. It is upon these principles solely, that we can promise to ourselves

felves any permanent fatisfaction in life, which alone is truly valuable. Without some rational object in our pursuits, and a steady rule of conduct in our common intercourse with the world ; we find ourselves cloyed and satiated with sensual enjoyments, and restless and uneasy in the very height and career of pleasure.

IN the mind alone can we trace the source of true enjoyment. But if that is disturbed and deranged, it can promise to itself no lasting satisfaction ; it can expect to partake of no true consolation, to receive no essential happiness or felicity, from all the outward advantages of fortune or condition in life. If serenity and contentment have not fixed their residence and taken up their abode, in that asylum ; in vain will all the temporary acquirements of the present scene of things be possessed.

WHILST the first representative of the human race could be contented to contemplate and adore the infinite perfections of
the

the Almighty in his works ; whilst he could survey, without any disorderly and irregular emotion, the wonderful construction of his own frame, and with just admiration of the surprizing faculties with which he was endued, glorify the omnipotent Creator of all ; and whilst he could with gratitude and thankfulness elevate his mind to the great Supreme, by whom he had been fashioned, and with joy and satisfaction accept and consider the favour of a companion to share in his pleasures and his comforts ; what more could be wanting to render him perfectly happy in himself ? what more could be necessary to a rational being, to whose * dominion and subjection all the creatures of the earth, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea, had been committed ?

SUCH was the state of innocence, in which man was placed, before the mind was corrupted and tainted by an indulgence of those sensual passions, which estranged

* Gen. i. 28.

and alienated its confidence from God; by whom it was left, as a punishment of its disobedience to the Almighty's will, to the natural effect of transgressing that original law, which had been solemnly pronounced as the test of submission. Only the fruit of one single tree was withheld from them. They might range over the garden without controul, and partake of whatever their soul delighted to enjoy. They might indulge in all the gratifications of sense, and satisfy the keenest sensations of their appetites without molestation, in this single instance only were they restrained, as the means of exercising and inuring them to obedience. Their rational faculties were to be under subjection to some law or rule; and the Creator of those faculties must certainly have a right to determine the mode of trial, which he should deem most expedient for that purpose. It was of little importance, considered in itself, what the criterion of subjection and obedience should be; speculation on this subject must be vain and absurd, and
can

can serve no other end but to promote and countenance a concealed, at least, if not an avowed Atheism.

BUT the subtilties of a tempter, and the bewitching aspect of the fruit appointed for the trial, captivated the senses of an unexperienced woman; by whose solicitations her companion also was induced to join in the transgression, and hazard the fatal experiment of disobedience. To this tempter they attended. By his artful insinuations they were deluded. They saw, or they fancied they saw, some extraordinary charms and attractions in the fruit, from which they were debarred; and they were induced to prevent the threatened caution, designed as a restraining motive for their welfare, by turning it into an engine of jealousy. It was suggested, that the Almighty had hereby excluded them from something, which would, if known, greatly increase their satisfaction and felicity? the bait was gilded with this crafty suggestion, “*in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes

* Gen. iii. 5.

“shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods,
“knowing good and evil.” Thus did man,
by attending to the delusion of an artful
tempter, hesitate in his belief of God’s
goodness and mercy to him; though but
just come out of the hands of his Maker.
Thus did man expose himself to the wrath
of the Almighty, by perverting those facul-
ties, with which God had endued him, into
means and instruments of disobeying his
wife and just commands.

HENCE it appears, to use the words of
a modern author †, “How man, by cri-
“minally giving way to confused notions
“of good, and consequently suffering his
“sensual appetite to gain the ascendancy
“over him, in contradiction to reason and
“duty, fell from his innocence; and this
“ascendancy of appetite, as sad experience
“but too plainly shews, is transmitted to
“all his posterity by the ordinary” and na-
tural course of things. Hence it appears;

† Preface to Macbean’s Dictionary of the Bible.

how † “ by one man sin entered into the
“ world, and death by sin, and so death
“ passed upon all men, for that all have
“ sinned.” Hence we have a very rational and easy account of the first transgression or fall of man, on which the great mystery of Redemption is grounded; and the fullest confirmation which can be desired of the doctrine of the text.

IF sin and death, then, were the natural consequences of this original transgression and disobedience, and all the posterity of the first Adam were involved in the effects of it; if the Almighty, in justice to his word, and in vindication of his insulted and injured dignity, was constrained to punish the violation of his primitive law, as a terror to the posterity of fallen man; if by this transgression, fear was become more particularly necessary, as an instrument to restrain them within the bounds of their duty, since experience had manifested that the principle of love was in-

† Rom. v. 12,

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sufficient

sufficient for the purpose, though supported by a threatening of the consequence; and if now they were fatally convinced of the serious nature of such threatening, by an immediate expulsion from Paradise, and an exclusion from the numerous gratifications of their senses which before were allowed them;—humiliating indeed was their state and condition, compared in respect of the original advantages and satisfaction which they then indulgently received. The senses had now in some degree usurped the command of reason; but they were very severely mortified, and actually lost much more than they gained. They were now absolutely prevented from sacrificing to, but certainly from satisfying, those appetites, in which before they were allowed most liberally to indulge. They were expelled from Paradise, and from the enjoyment of many of those delicious fruits and viands, in which they had before been permitted to gratify their desires abundantly. What could from hence ensue but confusion? Reason was weakened, and the senses had
gained

gained additional strength by this successful attack.

BUT the importunities of sense were very forcibly restrained; which was a merciful act of the Almighty, as it was the only means by which reason could recover in some measure that original power it had now lost. This afforded time for reason to resume her natural strength. By an exclusion from the means of gratifying the senses, the folly of yielding to their importunities, in opposition to the positive and declared will of the Almighty, must be manifest; and reason must give a decisive voice in favour of obedience to that will, as the only sure ground of satisfaction and consolation.

SUCH is the conclusion to be drawn from argument, in favour of this act of punishment in God, which really was an act of mercy. But the records of history convince us of this melancholy truth, that, notwithstanding this opportunity which was afford-

ed to reason, the senses still retained the ascendancy they had gained, and improved it to every purpose which their condition admitted. Of the immediate descendants of our first parents, we read that a * profligate Cain murdered his own brother Abel; and in a few ages after it is also declared, that † “the wickedness of man was *so* great in the earth, that it repented the Lord that he had made man,” such were the effects of this usurpation of the senses and the corruption of reason, “and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, “I will destroy man whom I have created, “from the face of the earth, both man and “beast, and the creeping thing, and “the fowls of the air; for it repenteth “me that I have made them.” Yet by means of one family, the head of which was less corrupt than the rest of mankind, a stock was preserved wherewith to people the world anew; for ‡ “Noah found grace “in the eyes of the Lord,” and was pre-

* Gen. iv. 8.

† Ch. vi. 5, 6, 7, 8.

‡ Ch. vii. 7

served

served "with his wife, and his three sons
"and their wives," by a very wonderful
and extraordinary device.

WICKEDNESS indeed was still predominant after the flood; and the Almighty in mercy raised up persons on various occasions, to check its progress. For he had promised that he would § "not again curse
"the ground any more for man's sake," as a token of his approbation of the sacrifice of Noah, after leaving the ark, in gratitude for his deliverance. God had engaged himself in a * "covenant with him
"and his seed after him, that all flesh
"should no more be cut off by the waters
"of a flood; and that there should not
"any more be a flood to destroy the earth." Hence we read of Abraham, the father of the faithful, of Isaac, of Jacob, of Joseph; each of them remarkable for many manifestations of God's goodness to them, and of their being signal instruments by their public declarations and example of preventing the

§ Ch. viii. 21.

* Ch. ix, 9, 11.

increase of wickedness, and of preserving the memorial of true religion in their families, while the world around them was given up to idolatry.

IN the histories of subsequent ages, the prevalence of the sensual and corrupt appetites of man is at all times very manifest, and on particular occasions notorious and excessive. This is an uncontroverted truth; of which the ages of Christianity, though the world has been greatly reformed by the introduction of the gospel, affords but too many convincing proofs.

HAVING thus briefly considered the effects of this predominance of sensual nature, in consequence of the primitive and original transgression of Adam; let us now see what methods have been used in different ages to counteract this natural, and necessary operation of justice. If God was in justice bound to punish man for this violation of his laws, it did not supersede the operations of mercy. It is in the dispensation

sation of mercy to his people, that the Almighty peculiarly delights. Even in the first signal punishment of transgression, I have shewn that mercy was a very distinguishing feature ; and future prospects of recovery from the consequences of that transgression were immediately opened, to prevent the offender from excess of grief, and to soften as much as possible the necessary execution of the divine threatenings. The instrument of the temptation is first condemned, and a period to the triumph of his victory foretold ; * “ because thou
“ hast done this, thou art cursed above all
“ cattle, and above every beast of the
“ field. And I will put enmity be-
“ tween thee and the woman, and
“ between thy seed and her seed : it
“ shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt
“ bruise his heel.” Though thou hast gained a partial advantage over this new inhabitant of a new world, the consequences of it shall have an end ; a compleat dominion shall hereafter be obtained by the

* Gen. iii. 14, 15.

seed of that very woman, whom thou hast seduced from the path of obedience, and thou shalt be reduced to the lowest and most humiliating state of existence.

CONSOLATION therefore was first administered, before the threatened punishment was inflicted. Farther instances of this merciful goodness are recorded in the history, and promised to the posterity of Abraham. It was farther limited to Isaac, to Jacob, to Judah. In the time of Moses, a regular dispensation was promulged by the Almighty for the government of this people; to preserve a knowledge of the true God in that family, to which the blessing had been promised. To Moses it was declared, * “ the Lord thy God will raise
“ up unto thee a prophet from the midst
“ of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me ;
“ unto him shall ye hearken. And I will
“ put my words in his mouth, and he
“ shall speak unto” the people “ all that
“ I shall command him.” Circumcision

* Deut. xviii. 15, 18.

also was appointed as a seal of the covenant made to Abraham ; and it afterwards was incorporated in the body of that law, which God delivered for his people by the hand of Moses.

NEITHER was the Almighty satisfied with conferring these acts of mercy upon his people. He raised up prophets and other remarkable persons, in various ages, for the good of those whom he had received into covenant, as their several exigences and necessities required. These were sometimes successful in accomplishing the objects of their mission, and at other times became the victims of vindictive rage. Sometimes they were productive of a partial or temporary reformation and repentance ; at other times they shewed that they were past recovery, and frequently added to their other crimes the indelible stain of murder. When truth was odious, no wonder that its advocates were insupportable.

So

So fully have I enlarged on the doctrine of the text, which is universally confirmed by daily experience, that the time would fail me to proceed to the objects for which it was introduced. For on this doctrine of the Fall of Man depend all the doctrines of Redemption by Christ. On this hinge alone can the necessity of the Christian Revelation be maintained and supported. It would be of little use to contemplate and rejoice in the nativity of a Saviour, if we were not frail and fallible creatures, and if we had no need of him. By this deduction of particulars from scripture history it appears, that man is grossly degenerated from that original state of purity and innocence in which he was created; and we have traced that degeneracy to a very natural source, by accounting for the effects of that original transgression of our first parents in a rational and easy way. Solomon himself, the wisest of men, hath left it on record, that man was originally more pure and perfect than in his present state; in all his
exten-

extensive researches, he found little but * “Vanity and vexation of spirit.” On this subject particularly he is very express and pointed; † “lo, this only have I “found, that God hath made man up- “right, but they have sought out many “inventions.” This is an indisputable truth, and a strong confirmation of the doctrine of the text; for nothing can be more manifest than this, that “by one “man’s offence death reigned by one.”

THUS I have prepared you for the history of our redemption by Christ, by proving the fundamental doctrine of the Fall of Man; and I might safely appeal to the hearts and consciences of all who hear me, to approve the sentiments which I have brought forward on this subject. But I do not mean from hence to exclaim, in the style of enthusiasm, on the corruption and degeneracy of the human heart, by any affected appeal to the passions; the predominance of the sensual appetites was the im-

* Eccles. i. 14.

† Ch. vii. 29.

mediate

mediate effect of the Fall, and it would be very inconsistent to seek for the remedy against that effect, by augmenting and supporting them in opposition to that power, on whose province they had unjustly and daringly usurped. It is by the application of our reason only to the revelation of God's word, that we can hope to conquer or at least to restrain our inordinate affections. It is only by restoring reason to that sovereignty and dominion in our minds, which originally belonged to it, that the moral effects of this Fall can be corrected. This is the lesson which Christianity teaches us; this the benefit which we obtain, by our alliance with its humane and benevolent Author.

LET us all apply ourselves to profit by the instructions, which have now been offered us; and since * “life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel,” let us carefully attend to the directions of that gospel, and the means which it has

* 2 Tim. i. 10.

prescribed for the attainment of immortality, and the destruction of the dominion of sin. God grant us a happy termination of our labours, to the honour and glory of his name, and to the promotion of holiness and virtue, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord!

S E R M O N I I

On the Redemption of Man.

PREACHED ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

GAL. IV. 4, 5.

BUT WHEN THE FULNESS OF TIME WAS
COME, GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON MADE
OF A WOMAN, MADE UNDER THE LAW,
TO REDEEM THEM THAT WERE UNDER
THE LAW, THAT WE MIGHT RECEIVE
THE ADOPTION OF SONS.

THE history of our Redemption and
deliverance from the moral effects of
the transgression of Adam, is the leading
and principal design of the revelation of the
gospel. The evangelists have given us the
simple facts, recorded in a summary and
natural way, with such instructions as its
author delivered for the guidance and direc-
tion of its followers; but it is in the ap-
plication

306 *On the Redemption of Man.*

plication that we more fully perceive the object of them, and consequently that we are enabled to discover the importance of considering our obligation to practise them, according to our respective conditions in life.

HAVING * lately demonstrated, in a very natural, easy, and rational way, the effects of man's original disobedience, and as we are convinced by undoubted and incontrovertible experience how it affects all his posterity ; it appears from hence, that their moral disposition is estranged and alienated from that dutiful submission and obedience which are due to the Almighty,---that the passions are constantly opposing reason, and contending for pre-eminence, ---and that the image of God, in which man was at first created and fashioned, is greatly obscured and defaced.

BUT we have seen, that the punishment of this disobedience, in the manner it was

* See the preceding Sermon.

inflicted,

inflicted, actually operated as a merciful dispensation. Enough has been said to prove that the Almighty never * “left himself without witness ;” but was always compassionately disposed towards this image of his own nature. It greatly lessened the guilt of this sin, that it was accomplished and effected by the seductions of an insidious agent ; and was neither occasioned by nor accompanied with the least tincture or principle of a designed or premeditated opposition to the authority of his Creator. It was an act of surprize, the consequence of delusion and misrepresentation, and therefore the sentence is much softened ; the punishment was only in part inflicted immediately after the transgression, though justice and the honour and veracity of God required that it should at last be fully executed.

Indeed, from the disorder which this great ascendancy of the passions produced in the human frame, or from some natural

* Acts xiv. 17.

308 *On the Redemption of Man.*

propensity in the fruit which was appointed for the criterion and test of obedience, which we are neither acquainted with, nor is it necessary in any respect to trouble ourselves about; man became mortal, and subject to death, in his corporal capacity, and at the same time suffered by the predominance of the sensual passions over reason, a degree of derangement in his mental one. This is a standing and perpetual monument of THAT justice, for which the Almighty, in vindication of his honour, and to demonstrate the danger of slighting and neglecting his dignity, has ever been distinguished. We have no more than two instances on record, those of * Enoch and Elijah, who were exceptions, for extraordinary purposes, to this universal doom; for we cannot with propriety consider our Saviour as a third, since he became obedient to death, and afterwards, to prove his superior nature, overcame him who had the power of death. We shall hereafter see, by what steps he came to that

* Gen. v. 24 — 2 Kings ii. 11.

state,

state, in which he so successfully triumphed over sin and death.

IN the various dispensations of the Almighty to mankind, individually as well as collectively, after the fall, the motives of mercy are everywhere manifest. Though the example of God's justice was necessary, yet man, who seems to have transgressed, not so much in his will as through the false representations of things by a subtle impostor, was evidently considered by his Creator as an object of compassion. Hence the means of consolation were administered to him; hence he was led to look forward to one, who should hereafter arise, to dispense to mankind such blessings and favours, as would serve to counteract and defeat the designs of the enemy in this successful attack upon our first parents. By virtue of several successive promises, the family, the time, the place, were all so particularly and accurately predicted, that an universal expectation prevailed in the world about the age in which our Saviour

appeared. "When the fulness of time
"was come, God sent forth his Son."
This was one of the characters to which he
was entitled; and by which, or some similar
distinction, he was also to be known.

BUT it was farther necessary, that he
should be "made of a woman;" that by
his appearing in human nature, he might
be induced from compassion and humanity
to commiserate the lapsed condition of
man, and as the Son of God to consider
of some means of rectifying that disorder
and confusion in the rational faculties of
this master-piece of creation, which were
introduced by the fall. It was also necessary,
after the law was revealed for the
good of mankind, that he should be
"made under the law," that so he might
manifest an obedience to it, and to every
dispensation which God had bestowed upon
man; for he was thereby qualified voluntarily
to submit himself, and as the Son of
God, to make full satisfaction to his Father's

ther's justice, and to remove the moral evil of disobedience.

HENCE also it follows, that the purpose for which this was to be done, was in order to redeem them "that are under the law" (and those who were in the highest favour with God), and pacify the offended Majesty of his Father; to restore them thereby, as by an avowed and settled covenant, to the privileges of rational creatures, and encouraging them to the practice of holiness and virtue, as becomes those who are created in the image of God, and are desirous of promoting his honour and glory.

By this progressive and orderly procedure, it was the grand design of the Almighty, through his Son, to restore mankind to a state of connexion and alliance with himself. It was in order "that we might receive the adoption of sons," and thereby be enabled to participate of the privileges and advantages of sons, that

so many continued and extended acts of mercy were vouchsafed to the world. Of these various communications, suffer me, to spare your time and myself trouble, to conclude that you are all fully satisfied. It is impossible that you can profess yourselves Christians, and at the same time not be convinced of that authentic history, which is transmitted to us in the books of the Old Testament. To those books, therefore, I shall at present refer you. To that law, which these books contain, the apostle fully refers in the words of the text. To that period which was foretold by the prophets, which the Almighty vouchsafed on various occasions, to send to his people, with additional instructions and special information, the very first words of the text allude. “When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”

THAT

THAT this period was not a secret, known only to a few, but the general sentiment and expectation of the world, is very manifest from the message of the Jews, probably of the Sanhedrim or great council, by their high priests and Levites to John. * “Who art thou?” is their authoritative and imperious demand. “And he confessed, and denied not, but confessed, “I am not the Christ,” whose coming the world are so anxiously expecting. “Art thou Elias?” that messenger of the covenant, spoken of by † Malachi, or that harbinger which is mentioned by the prophet ‡ Isaiah. “And he saith, I am “not.” “Art thou that prophet,” by whatever name he may be distinguished amongst his various titles, of whom we have such manifest notices and marks of singularity in the prophetic code. “And “he answered, No.”

* John i. 19—22.

† Malachi iv. 5.

‡ Isaiah xl. 3.

SURPRIZED at these unexpected answers, as they fully expected his acknowledgment of one of these characters; to obtain, if possible, the object of their mission, they farther interrogate him, “Who art thou
 “that we may give an answer to them that
 “sent us? What sayest thou of thyself?”
 And again, * “Why baptizest thou then,
 “if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias,
 “neither that prophet?” All which enquiries, and attended too with so much anxiety and eagerness for a satisfactory reply, are convincing proofs, that some remarkable and distinguished personage was expected. Even John himself, after he had been thrown into prison, sends the message by his own disciples to Christ himself, † “Art thou he that should
 “come, or do we look for another?”
 Our Saviour satisfies this enquiry, by the application of several prophetic characters to his own personal conduct, and dismisses them with this observation, “Go,
 “and shew John again those things which

* John i. 25.

† Matt. xi. 3—6.

“ ye

“ ye do hear and see : The blind receive
“ their sight, and the lame walk ; the
“ lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear ;
“ the dead are raised up, and the poor
“ have the gospel preached unto them.
“ And blessed is he, whosoever shall not
“ be offended in me.”

Both * Haggai and Daniel so nearly point out the period in which this extraordinary character was to appear, that in no other age, before or after, was it possible to take place. It had been promised to Abraham generally, that † “ in his seed should all “ the families of the earth be blessed ;” and so anciently as in the time of Jacob it was prophesied by that Patriarch, that this could not have happened later than the age assigned to it. He declared that ‡ “ the “ sceptre *should* not depart from Judah, “ nor a law-giver from between his feet, “ until Shiloh *should* come ;” and such are the circumstances which are pointed out

* Chap. ii. 7, 9.—Dan. ix. 24.

† Gen. xii. 3.

‡ Chap. xlix. 10.

in Daniel, that it could not possibly have happened much sooner. One of his titles, too, was, * “Prince of Peace ;” and therefore a time of universal peace was the fittest season for his manifestation, an incident which was then only for once known thro’ a long succession of ages. It is needless to say more upon so very plain a subject ; which is sufficiently manifest from many other passages and expressions of scripture.

THE majesty of this personage may be inferred from the passage of *Isaiah* just now quoted. The whole verse, so well known to every Christian of common attention, runs thus ; “Unto us a child is born ; unto us a son is given ; and the government shall be upon his shoulders ; and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” So that though he was both a child and a son,” yet is he called, “the mighty God, the everlasting Father ;”

* *Isaiah* ix. 6.

which

which observations though I mean not to enlarge on it, plainly demonstrates the propriety of the apostle's expression in the text, of "God's sending forth his son in "the fulness of time." And from what hath been remarked on this and a former occasion, the pertinency of the same Apostle's assertion to the Hebrews is sufficiently illustrated; that * "God, who at sundry "times and in divers manners, spoken in "time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoke unto "us by his Son, whom he hath appointed "heir of all things, by whom also he made "the world." Elsewhere the revelation of the gospel is denoted by the expression of † "God manifested in the flesh;" and it is therefore called "the mystery of godliness," as "beyond controversy" it must be admitted.

THE prophet Isaiah, in alluding to this "great mystery," has a remarkable pas-

* Heb. i. 1, 2.

† 1 Tim. iii. 16.

318 *On the Redemption of Man.*

fage to our purpose. * “ Behold a virgin
 “ shall conceive and bear a son, and shall
 “ call his name Immanuel, which is, be-
 “ ing interpreted,” as St. Matthew has
 added, “ God with us.” So that this ex-
 traordinary personage was also to be born of
 a virgin, or, as the text has expressed it,
 “ made of a woman ;” and since SHILOH
 was to spring from Judah, and that farther
 limited to † “ a root of Jesse and the sure
 “ mercies of David,” he must, also under
 these considerations, be “ made under the
 “ law,” and be subject to its precepts as all
 others of that family were. It was his
 own declaration, that he was ‡ “ not come
 “ to destroy the law and the prophets, but
 “ to fulfil them.” His obedience to the
 law, even to its ceremonials, was signal
 and remarkable.

WHILE he was under the jurisdiction of
 his parents, they performed every thing for
 him which the law required. § “ When

* Isa. vii. 14.—Mat. i. 23.

† Isa. xi. 10.—Acts xiii. 34.

‡ Mat. v. 17. § Luke ii. 21—23, 51.

“ eight

“ eight days were accomplished, he was
“ circumcised ;” and his mother, on “ the
“ accomplishment of her days of purifica-
“ tion, brought him to Jerusalem to pre-
“ sent him to the Lord, and to offer a sacri-
“ fice according to the law.” At the age
of twelve years he accompanied his parents
“ to Jerusalem to the feast of the passover ;”
after which we read that “ he went down
“ with them,” after a most extraordinary
scene, “ and came to Nazareth, and was
“ subject unto them.”

IN his public life also he was equally ob-
servant of the law, as he had been in a pri-
vate station. His first act was to offer him-
self to John for baptism ; and he over-rules
the objection of John by this remarkable
declaration, * “ Suffer it to be so now, for
“ thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteous-
“ ness.” At the public feasts, he con-
stantly resorted to the temple at Jerusalem,
as required by the law ; and with the same
breath that he condemns the lives and ex-

* Mat. iii. 15.

320 *On the Redemption of Man.*

ample of its teachers, he strongly enforces an attention to their doctrines. * “ The
 “ scribes and pharisees sit in Moses’ seat ;
 “ all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you
 “ observe, that observe and do. But do
 “ not ye after their works ; for they say,
 “ and do not.” His observance of the
 law, and zeal for its honour, are on every
 occasion remarkable and conspicuous.

As this seed of the woman was to bruise
 the serpent’s head, and all the families of
 the earth were to be blessed in it ; and as
 it was to become a † “ SHILOH” or salva-
 tion, “ to whom the gathering of the peo-
 “ ple should be :” as he was to be the son
 of David, and as even David himself calls
 him Lord, when he saith, ‡ “ The Lord
 “ said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right
 “ hand, until I make thine enemies thy
 “ footstool.” As § “ the branch of righte-
 ousness, which was to grow up unto David,”
 was to be distinguished by the name of

* Chap. xxiii. 2, 3.

† Gen. xlix. 10.

‡ Ps. cx. 1.

§ Jer. xxxiii. 15, 16.

“ The

"The Lord our righteousness," and as this branch was to "execute judgment" and righteousness in the land;" do not these sufficiently point out the nature, office, and design of the great person which is hereby denoted? I speak not now * of many other characters and marks of this person, respecting his state of humiliation and suffering; on a future occasion it will be more pertinent to notice these, which at present would engross too much of our time. It will then also more fully appear, what the object of all this obedience was; why "God," at a particular season, called

* The Author is on this occasion peculiarly happy to refer his readers to a volume lately published, entitled, "Sermons on the Divinity of Christ, by Robert Hawker, Vicar of Charles, Plymouth, printed for J. Deighton, London, 1792." Generally acquainted, as he has some time been, with the avowed object of these discourses; though their recent appearance has precluded him from speaking particularly to their merits so fully as he wished, he has introduced, by way of note, a reference or two to some of the leading doctrines therein contained. He wishes in this place to refer to Sermon IV. p. 143, &c. Sermon V. p. 184, &c. and Sermon VI. p. 222, also p. 226, &c.

Y

"the

322 *On the Redemption of Man.*

“ the fulness of time, sent forth his son,” and why he should so wonderfully humble himself, as to be “ made of a woman,” and thereby partake of human nature. It will also be farther manifested, why he was also “ made under the law,” of which many arguments have been adduced already. To that occasion, therefore, I shall refer the discussion of the latter part of the text ; when the great mystery of Redemption, for which this remarkable preparation was made, and for which, as on this day, “ he appeared” in the world † “ in the form of a servant, “ and was made in the likeness of men” will be manifest. It was “ to redeem them “ that are under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons,” that he passed through all these preparatory scenes.

WITH the history of our Saviour’s nativity, and the natural or supernatural phenomena which accompanied it, and were rendered subservient to it, I have not at all occupied your attention. Besides the in-

† Phil. ii. 7.

struction which offers itself to general notice in the gospel of St. Luke, the peculiar lessons, epistle, and gospel, which our church has appointed for the special service of this day, afford full information on that subject. The discourses of our ministers, too, are usually adapted to the same purpose on this festival of the Nativity; and, therefore, a less frequented track has been pursued, to preserve a chain in our endeavours to elucidate the cause, origin, and progress of the great and astonishing mystery of Redemption.

LET us, then, celebrate this anniversary of our Saviour's birth, by endeavouring to live as becomes those who acknowledge their belief of the great truths of Christianity. Let us not neglect, at this important season, to partake of those mysteries of union and alliance, which he has appointed for his faithful followers. It would ill become us, as Christians, to turn our backs upon the table of the Lord, which is now adorned for our reception as welcome

guests ; and such a dereliction and inattention to his precepts accord but very ill with our professions. But, in contemplating and celebrating the remembrance of his birth, let us heartily join in this mysterious banquet, the appointed pledge of communion and fellowship with him as our head, and with each other as fellow-partakers of the same blessings. God grant to us all a due sense of the importance of it, and a serious and hearty conviction of its effects, for the sake of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ !

S E R M O N III.

PREACHED ON GOOD-FRIDAY. *

*On Sacrifices and the Ransom paid for
Mankind.*

HEB. X. 5.

SACRIFICE AND OFFERING THOU Wouldest
NOT, BUT A BODY HAST THOU PREPAR-
ED ME.

IT is not more extraordinary than true,
that although the Almighty had posi-
tively appointed sacrifices and offerings
under the law, yet we find them on many
occasions degraded and under-rated, and
spoken of in terms not the most respec-
table.

* It is somewhat extraordinary that, whilst endea-
vours are using to promote the celebration and ob-

table. This consideration is of much importance to a due sense of their value ; and suggests an enquiry, for what ends and purposes they were appointed.

IN endeavouring to satisfy and obviate some obstacles, which this suggestion might otherwise be productive of, a few observations may not at least be improper, and perhaps they may be deemed necessary. That

service of this solemn day, in almost every place, in a holy and religious manner, and agreeable to the design and intention of our church in appointing its service, a serious attention to so important a matter has never yet engaged the consideration of the Navy Board. How strange and inconsistent must it appear to a stranger, that a solemn service shall be performed to commemorate an event of the utmost importance to Christians ! and at the same time so many thousands of his Majesty's immediate servants and subjects shall be precluded from joining in it. If we have cause to glory in the sufferings of Christ for the sins of mankind ; surely the Navy Board will not be averse to relieve their artificers and other labourers from their manual labours on so serious an occasion. A proper representation of this matter from some persons high in office, would, no doubt, be productive of so desirable an effect.

sacrifices

sacrifices were in very early practice and use, as a mode of worship and homage offered to the Almighty, is very manifest. The offerings of * Abel and of Cain are a proof of it; and from the readiness with which † Noah after the flood had recourse to this expression of gratitude and thankfulness, it seems more than probable that he was fully in the habit of it before the deluge, and that mankind had received some positive command for it. The histories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are also abundant in the matter of sacrifices and offerings, and in building altars for that purpose. The history of Balak, too, as well as the whole dispensation of the Mo-
saic œconomy, afford a demonstration that sacrifices were considered as means of supplicating blessings and favours, and of gratitude for mercies received.

PROFESSEDLY I mean not at present to assign any positive reasons, why God should at all be pleased with sacrifices; though

* Gen. Ch. iv.

† Id. viii. 20.

from what shall be advanced, it will not probably be difficult to deduce as many observations on that subject, as may be sufficient for every necessary and essential purpose. From the account of them both before and under the law, we may readily infer, by a rational arrangement of facts, that they were undoubtedly of divine appointment. Perhaps, too, they might be considered as tests of obedience, as well as their being expressions of thankfulness. The great principle which seems to preponderate in the uses and exercises of sacrifice, is that of gratitude to God; and as calculated to preserve and maintain the necessity and importance of obedience. By making * “the first fruits holy, the lump “was also holy;” and whether it was in the productions of the earth, or in the advantages of spoil gained by wars and commotions, it was always to be sanctified by appropriating a portion of it to the Almighty. When Abraham † returned from

* Rom. xi. 16.

† Gen. xiv. 17—20.

the slaughter of the kings, he dedicated a part of the spoil to God, which was performed by imparting it to his representative on earth.

As this tended to maintain and keep up the spirit of obedience, and to manifest a due perception of the Almighty's indulgent favours to mankind, it certainly was a matter, which, in a very high degree, was entitled to their attention. It was this which preserved the existence of religion, in the midst of corruption. It was this which operated as an advocate for reason, and assisted it to counteract the sensual passions, and to prevent their too great predominance. And if, as we have seen some grounds for concluding, the Almighty executed his threatening against man, after the transgression, only in such part and to such a degree as was ultimately an act of mercy to him; and if the consequences of that transgression were not so extensive as many have been induced to conceive, which is plainly to be inferred from a comparison
of

of the tenor of † God's blessing to Noah after the flood with the original blessing pronounced upon man before the fall ;—unwilling as we should be to admit arguments, which are drawn from Jewish traditions, yet reason plainly tells us from these circumstances, that God must have prescribed some farther outlines of conduct and obedience to his creatures. So far, therefore, as such traditions of precepts of behaviour and rules of life, which are said to have been communicated to Noah and others, and very probably to Adam himself after the fall, are consonant to reason and perfectly consistent with the dignity and attributes of the Almighty ; it is no way unfair or improper to admit them. For hereby we neither ‡ “ teach for doctrines “ the commandments of men, nor make “ void any commandments of God.”

TOGETHER, therefore, with the general promise of recovery from the effects of

† Ch. ix. 1—3, compared with Ch. i. 28, 29.
See also the Note on Sermon 6. p. 96.

‡ Mark vii. 7, 8.

the fall, by the seed of the woman ; it may reasonably be concluded, in order to perfect the divine œconomy of human redemption, determined and decreed by the Almighty, that these allusive practices were enjoined. Through the different ages of the world, both before and under the law, we plainly perceive a systematic design and object in God's dispensations to mankind. Leading from one chain of events to another, the providence of the divine Being in governing the world, according to its different states and circumstances at different periods, is clear and manifest. At all seasonable opportunities, and on all great and important occasions, this wonderful instance of mercy is referred to, as the subjects will respectively admit. It pervades every part of history, of precept, of prophecy, throughout the revelation of the Old Testament ; and nothing but the expansive wisdom and comprehensive foresight of HIM who hath set bounds to every thing, could be equal to so stupendous and extensive an act of power. Omnipotence itself only
could

could effect such a wonderful and astonishing plan.

HAVING said so much on the institution of sacrifices in general, and shewed as far as we reasonably may, that long before the law or the dispensation of Moses, they must certainly have had a divine original; it may be proper to observe that reason farther corroborates this conclusion, from the particular care and attention which are manifest in relating the circumstances of such dispensation. For since their existence was not barely known, but evidently approved by God before the law; the particulars of their celebration being declared so exactly by the Almighty himself, are abundantly conclusive for the opinion, that they had originally the same authority, though it is not recorded in any history on which we can depend.

To spend time in repeating at large the various kinds of sacrifices which are mentioned in the Mosaic law, and distinctly com-

commanded and directed according to their different objects and purposes, will be unnecessary ; but perhaps it would be an injustice to the subject of this day's solemnity, to pass over the nature and institution of the passover, from which we are to derive the doctrine of redemption. It may likewise be considered as essential to the plan, which these discourses have evidently pointed to ; the object of which has been to furnish the sober and serious Christian with a rational account of these important articles of our faith, together with an easy and pertinent discussion of the fall and original transgression of our first parents, as the basis whereon it becomes necessary.

THE institution of the passover was a matter of very great magnitude and importance ; and originated on a very solemn and awful occasion. When the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had
* “ increased abundantly, and multiplied,
“ and waxed exceeding mighty” in Egypt,

* Exod. i. 7.

whither

whither they had transmigrated by the divine direction in the season of a grievous famine ; when, through their numbers, they became so much an object of jealousy to the Egyptian court, that an inhuman and cruel policy was considered as the only effectual expedient to discourage and check their rapid population ; and when it was apprehended that, out of a pretence of serving* “ the Lord God of the Hebrews,” the government had cause to be alarmed at the consequences of permitting such a numerous body of people to be collected, and that the state might be in danger if they were suffered to “ go three days journey into the wilderness,” as they requested, in order to “ sacrifice unto the “ Lord *their* God ;”—the most shocking devices were invented and practised against them by these Egyptian tyrants which were reflected back with tenfold interest on that haughty people by a series of grievous and heavy plagues, inflicted upon them by the Almighty’s command. The more severely

* Exod. v. 3.

they

they treated the Israelites, the more sorely were the calamities returned upon themselves *. It shall suffice to say, that, preparatory to the last and greatest calamity, the sacrifice of the passover was the appointed pledge of safety and protection to the first-born of Israel.

AFTER God had threatened the destruction of all the first-born of Egypt, to compel the obstinate and supercilious Pharaoh and his imperious court to dismiss the Israelites, this was the direction given to his own people by Moses and Aaron ; which it will be proper to repeat somewhat at large. † “ Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year ; ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from

* See Sermon viii. preceding, page 119, &c.

† Exod. xii. 3, 5, 6—8, 10—14, 15.

“ the

“ the goats. And ye shall keep it until
“ the fourteenth day of the same month ;
“ and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood,
“ and strike it on the two side posts, and
“ on the upper door post of the houses,
“ wherein they shall eat it. And they
“ shall eat the flesh in that night ; roast
“ with fire, and unleavened bread, and
“ with bitter herbs they shall eat it. And
“ ye shall let nothing of it remain until the
“ morning ; and that which remaineth of
“ it until the morning ye shall burn with
“ fire. And thus shall ye eat it ; with
“ your loins girded, your shoes on your
“ feet, and your staff in your hand, and
“ ye shall eat in haste ; it is the Lord’s
“ passover. For I will pass through the
“ land of Egypt, and will smite all the
“ first-born in the land of Egypt, both
“ man and beast ; and against all the gods
“ of Egypt will I execute judgment.
“ And the blood shall be to you for a
“ token upon the houses where you are ;
“ and

“ and when I see the blood, I will pass
“ over you, and the plague shall not be
“ upon you to destroy you, when I smite
“ the land of Egypt. And this day shall
“ be unto you for a memorial; and ye
“ shall keep it a feast to the Lord, through-
“ out your generations; ye shall keep it
“ a feast by an ordinance for ever.”

SUCH, and for such purposes, was the passover instituted. Other circumstances also were particularly noted; as the * “ eating unleavened bread for seven days,” which was, firstly, a matter of necessity, and afterwards a memorial; its being forbidden to strangers, unless circumcised and naturalized; that no bone should be broken; that all the congregation should keep it; and that circumcision was an indispensable requisite; that it should be kept † “ in his season from year to year;” that the first-born of children were to be redeemed, and also the first-born of unclean

* Id. Ch. xii. 34, 39, 43—49.

† Ch. xiii. 10, 13, 15.

cattle; and that the first-born of cattle, appointed for the purpose, were to be sacrificed.

OF the observance of this passover in subsequent ages we have sufficient intimations in scripture. In the rehearsal of the law, many particular remarks are made respecting sacrifices in general, which may be seen at large in the twelfth chapter of Deuteronomy; and in the eighteenth chapter, the rules concerning the passover, the feast of weeks, and of tabernacles are repeated, with circumstances more suitable and expressly adapted to their condition after they came into the land of Canaan. These are partly continued in the seventeenth; but in the eighteenth is an express promise of another prophet, which was hereafter to arise, like unto Moses. We read also that the passover was celebrated in the * “camp at Gilgal, in the “plains of Jericho;” of Elkanah and all his house, who † “who went up to offer

* Josh. v. 10.

† 1 Sam. i. 21, &c.

“ unto

“ unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice,” probably of the passover, and of his son Samuel’s being set apart for the service of God; and of Elkanah and Hannah, who * “ went up from year to year to offer the “ yearly sacrifice,” at which time “ Samuel ministered before the Lord, being “ a child, girded with a linen ephod.” We read also of sacrifices being offered in abundance † at the dedication of the temple and of Solomon’s appointing their observance in the temple three times in every year.

To name but one instance more, it is recorded of Josiah, that he ‡ “ commanded all the people, saying, keep the passover unto the Lord your God, as it is “ written in the book of the covenant, “ surely,” adds the scribe, “ there was not “ holden such a passover from the days of “ the judges that judged Israel, nor in all “ the days of the kings of Israel, nor of

* Ch. ii. 18, 19. † 1 Kings viii. 62, 63.—ix. 25.

‡ 2 Kings xxiii. 21—23.

“ the kings of Judah ; but in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, wherein this passover was holden to the Lord in Jerusalem.”

HENCE it should seem, as if this institution had been grossly neglected. It appears, too, from history, that where it was observed, the practice of sacrifices was more frequently met with in the high places of their idols than elsewhere. And though the temple worship, after that was erected, might contribute greatly to preserve the form and externals of religion ; corruption seems to have been very predominant, and the idea of a memorial probably was very little attended to.

PERHAPS also we may reasonably assign to this cause the expostulation of Isaiah.

* “ To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me ? saith the Lord ; I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts ; and I de-

* Isa. i. 11, 13, 15.

“ light

“ light not in the blood of bullocks, or of
“ lambs, or of he-goats. Bring no more
“ vain oblations ; incense is an abomina-
“ tion unto me ; the new moons and
“ sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I can-
“ not away with ; it is iniquity, even the
“ solemn meeting. When ye spread forth
“ your hands, I will hide mine eyes
“ from you ; yea, when ye make many
“ prayers, I will not hear : your hands
“ are full of blood :” And it is manifest from
what follows, that a moral reformation
was the great end and design set forth by
the typical representations of sacrifices ;
in which, as plainly appears, they were
grossly defective. For * “ Zion shall be
“ redeemed with judgment” and equity,
and not with oblations ; “ and her converts
“ with righteousness,” not with sacrifices.
In the exercises of judgment and righteous-
ness we must excel ; in these distinguishing
characters and marks of the divine attri-
butes, wherein the dignity of his nature is
so eminently manifested, we must render

* V. 27.

ourselves conspicuous; and in an obedience to his righteous laws and attention to that dignity which is so eminently conducive to his honour, we must ever demonstrate our conformity to that nature. This * “ is
 “ more than all whole burnt offerings and
 “ sacrifices,” as the Scribe interpreted in answer to our Saviour’s reply to the question,
 “ Which is the first commandment ?
 “ And Jesus answered, The first of all
 “ the commandments is, Hear, O Israel,
 “ the Lord our God is one Lord. And
 “ thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with
 “ all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and
 “ with all thy mind, and with all thy
 “ strength. And thou shalt love thy
 “ neighbour as thyself.”

To the same purpose hath Micah argued.
 † “ Wherewith shall I come before the
 “ Lord, and bow myself before the high
 “ God ? Shall I come before him with
 “ burnt offerings, with calves of a year
 “ old ? Will the Lord be pleased with

* Mark xii. 28, &c. † Micah Ch. vi. 6—8.

“ thousands

“ thousands of rams, or with ten thousands
“ of rivers of oil ? Shall I give my first-
“ born for my transgression, the fruit of
“ my body for the sin of my soul ? He
“ hath shewed thee, O man, what is
“ good ; and what doth the Lord require
“ of thee, but to do justly, and to love
“ mercy, and to walk humbly with thy
“ God ?” Obedience and dutiful sub-
mission to the will of the Almighty, and
a steady endeavour to imitate his nature,
is the principal object and design of reli-
gion ; to restore that image of God, in
which man was originally created, and of
which he still retains some resemblance
and portion, to its rank in the creation ;
to cultivate and improve that * “ Lamp
“ of the Lord” which is bestowed upon
“ him, to curb and subdue the sensual pas-
sions ; to become more and more like unto
God in the practice and exercise of all those
virtues and perfections of the Deity, which
as men we may pursue, and in which we
may delight ;—must and ever will constitute

* Proverbs,

and form the distinguishing and special character and conduct of the true servant of the Almighty.

THE psalmist's observations had long before been to the same effect. * "Sacrifice
 " and meat-offering thou wouldest not;
 " burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin hast
 " thou not required; then said I, lo, I
 " come, in the volume of the book it is
 " written of me, that I should fulfil thy
 " will, O my God: I am content to do
 " it, yea, thy law is within my heart."
 And what else can this refer to, but to the volume or book of the law of Moses; in which it was declared by Moses, as we have already noted, on a former occasion,—
 † " The Lord thy God will raise up unto
 " thee a prophet from the midst of thee,
 " of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him
 " shall ye hearken." This was the ‡ " Shi-
 " loh, to whom, when he came, the gather-
 " ing of the people should be." And this

* Psalm xl. 8, 9, 10.

† Deut. xviii. 15.

‡ Gen. xlix. 10.

passage of the psalmist is expressly applied by St. Paul in the text, and nearly in the very same words, in proving to the Hebrews the great importance of Christ's sacrifice.

IN another psalm, which was constantly considered by the ancient Jews as a prophecy of the Messiah whom they expected; on which account it is retained as proper for the service of this day, there is this remarkable expression; * "They pierced
" my hands and my feet; I may tell all
" my bones; they stand staring and looking upon me. They part my garments
" among them; and cast lots upon my
" vesture." As a proof of this opinion, another passage of this very psalm was applied to that Messiah, when he uttered in an agony the first words of it, as relative to himself; "My God, my God, why
" hast thou forsaken me. † ELOI, ELOI,
" LAMA SABACHTHANI, let be," say they,
" let us see whether Elias will come to
" save him. ‡ He trusted in God, that he

* Psalm xxii. 17, 18, 1. † Mat. xxvii. 46, 49.

‡ V. 43. com. Ps. xxii. 8.

" would

“ would deliver him ; let him deliver
“ him now, if he will have him ; for he
“ said, I am the Son of God.”

THIS brings me to consider for what purposes he came into the world, and what indications we have of this in the Old Testament. But on these subjects we must be very brief, as a great part of our time has been already consumed in shewing how greatly obedience is to be preferred to sacrifice.

THE remarkable expressions contained in a celebrated chapter of Isaiah, have always been considered among the leading prophecies to this purpose. But to do it justice, we must have recourse to some of the verses of the preceding chapter, where the subject commences. On the prospect of the good effects, the prophet in a strain of joy and gladness thus exults ; * “ How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of
“ him that bringeth good tidings, that

* Isa. liii. 7, 9, 10.

“ publisheth

“ publisheth peace ; that bringeth good
“ tidings of good, that publisheth salva-
“ tion ; that saith unto Zion, thy God
“ reigneth ! Break forth into joy,” con-
tinues he, and “ sing together, ye waste
“ places of Jerusalem ; for the Lord hath
“ comforted his people, he hath redeem-
“ ed Jerusalem ; and all the ends of the
“ earth shall see the salvation of our God.”
Such were to be the happy effects of his
appearance to the world in general, as may
be seen still more at large in the same
chapter.

CONTRASTED with this glorious dispen-
sation to others, how different in this
respect was the condition of himself ? in-
much that it might well appear incredible
and inconsistent, if facts and history did
not fully prove it. * “ Who,” says he,
“ hath believed our report ? and to whom
“ is the arm of the Lord revealed ?” Is
it possible that so much glory should be
so clouded and obscured, and the author

* Ch. liii. 1, &c.

of so much felicity to others, be himself apparently so far removed from it? Yet certain it is, that “ he shall grow up before
“ him as a tender plant, and as a root out
“ of a dry ground :” that “ he hath no
“ form nor comeliness ; and when we
“ shall see him, there is no beauty that
“ we should desire him.” So distantly is he circumstanced from any situation of distinction in civil life, that “ he is
“ despised and rejected of men, a man of
“ sorrows, and acquainted with grief ;
“ and we hid as it were, our faces from
“ him ; he was despised, and we esteemed
“ him not. Surely, he hath borne our
“ griefs, and carried our sorrows,” though so little did we consider the design of it, that “ we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was
“ wounded for our transgressions ; he was
“ bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him ; and
“ with his stripes we are healed.” This is the foundation of that joy which is described in the preceding chapter ; for “ all
“ we,

“ we, like sheep” have followed the general track, and our sensual passions have more or less prevailed from the first indulgence of them in paradise, to the prejudice of our reason. We “ have gone astray” from the paths of strict rectitude and obedience; “ and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from death; and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul” or life “ an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and
“ the

“ the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in
“ his hands. He shall see of the travel of
“ his soul, and shall be satisfied ; by his
“ knowledge shall my righteous servant
“ justify many ; for he shall bear their
“ iniquities. Therefore will I divide him
“ a portion with the great, and he shall
“ divide the spoil with the strong ; be-
“ cause he hath poured out his soul unto
“ death ; and he was numbered with the
“ transgressors ; and he bare the sin of
“ many, and made intercession for the
“ transgressors.”

COMPARING this chapter (which is appointed for the first lesson of the evening service) with the history of our Saviour's life, but more particularly of his death and passion, of which many minute circumstances are plainly foretold ; and if we consider the first lesson for this morning's service, with the history recorded in the second and the gospel for the day, as related by St. John ; is it not manifest, that in the person of our Saviour all these things
were

were plainly accomplished, and that he became our ransom for the effects of Adam's transgression. Is it not evident, that the perfect obedience which he performed on the part of mankind, was preferred to all the sacrifices of the law ; and that * “ by “ the offering of his own body once for “ all, he took away” the effects of “ sin “ by the sacrifice of himself?”

It is herein observable, that no notice has been taken of the various types, which have been commonly brought forward to prove a propriety in the application of many scripture passages to particular doctrines relating to redemption. In this wonderful consummation of that chain of mercies, which had been vouchsafed to mankind from the time of the fall, we discover the amazing goodness of God ; but we likewise discover the odiousness of sin, and the justice of the Almighty, in the vindication of his honour and dignity by its punishment. Cruel as the death of cruci-

* Heb. ix. 26.

fixion must be in its best state, those insults and mockeries which were offered to this sinless and perfect Being, aggravated the punishment by augmenting the sense of its shame and disgrace. But in order to accomplish this merciful end, the redemption of man, he * “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; † and he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”

ARE we, then, convinced of the heinous nature of those crimes, which required so dear and precious an expiation? let us set ourselves to profit by this wonderful act of mercy, and to ‡ “purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.” Let it be our study and endeavour to § “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called;” to manifest our reliance on the merits of his passion, and to do || “whatsoever is well-pleasing in his sight.”

* Phil. ii. 8.

† Heb. ix. 12.

‡ V. 14.

§ Eph. iv. 1.

|| Heb. xiii. 21.

S E R M O N I V .

On the Resurrection of Christ.

PREACHED ON EASTER DAY.

ROM. VIII. 34.

IT IS CHRIST THAT DIED; YEA, RATHER, THAT IS RISEN AGAIN.

I N an age, and in a country, which generally acknowledges the truth of the Christian religion, it seems needless to prove, to an assembly like the present, its divine original. Arguments which must, from their nature, be extremely complex, and inadequate to the common apprehensions of mankind, would be uselessly offered to the generality of our Christian con-

A a gregations.

354 *On the Resurrection of Christ.*

gregations. The subtilties of Redemption would, and ever will, be an incomprehensible mystery to the far greater part, I might have said, all the professors of Christianity.

BUT this does not any way affect the truth of the Christian religion, or supply the least cause of doubt or hesitation of its credibility. It contains no mysteries, but such as are either founded in the weak capacity of frail and finite beings to comprehend the perfection and infinite nature of the Almighty, or such as are grounded on the positive and express promises and declarations of divine authority; and these must be admitted as matters of faith, for the trial and exercise of our obedience to the will of God, which have eternal truth for their voucher.

IN considering the great and important doctrines of Redemption, these observations are of essential service. We are at a loss, in contemplating the prophecies and declarations

declarations of the Almighty, respecting the Redemption of mankind from the punishment and effects of sin, which most to wonder at; the person accomplishing it, the nature and manner of its accomplishment, or the effects to be derived from it. Whatever obscurity they might appear under, as well before as under the Mosaic dispensation; it is certain, from the general sentiments of mankind on this subject, that they expected something very remarkable in their accomplishment.

It would carry me far beyond the limits which I have prescribed to this discourse, to shew the grounds, from whence these general sentiments and expectations of mankind originated. But what falls more particularly within my present purpose, is, to consider only the fact, that it was so. And to this, all history bears testimony; but in a more especial manner it is manifest, in the ages immediately preceding the appearance of our Saviour, the age in which he

356 *On the Resurrection of Christ.*

appeared, and those which immediately followed.

THE history of the death and passion of our Saviour, as recorded by the several evangelists, is abundant to our purpose. If to these we shall subjoin the several declarations of his successors, the apostles, and thereby comprehend the whole canon of the New Testament ; what more can be wanting to satisfy and convince any honest enquirer.

WE grant, that this is the testimony of INTERESTED men in their own cause, from which this kind of proof is particularly drawn. But the question which occurs hereupon is of much importance to be attended to,---namely, HOW were they INTERESTED ? Their conduct is a demonstration, that they preferred the love of truth to every consideration of temporal advantage or personal safety. Though they were carried before councils, before rulers, before kings, to answer for their words and actions ; though
they

On the Resurrection of Christ. 357

they were * “beaten with rods, stoned,” imprisoned, to stop their declarations; yet they boldly preached in the name of that Christ, whom the Roman governor and the clamorous Jews had united to condemn to a cruel death. It was † “Pilate,” the representative of a gentile dominion, who “gave” that unjust and detestable “sentence, that it should be as they required;” “and the voices of” the Jewish multitude, instigated by “the chief priests, pre-vailed” to accomplish the cruel and torturing death of crucifixion. It is farther to be remarked, that this punishment was wholly unknown in their own law; and it is from hence manifest, that both Jews and Gentiles, who were so essentially concerned in the effects of it, concurred as the instruments of its accomplishment.

It was the great mystery of the death of Christ, thus effected and thus accomplished, which the successors of our Saviour, selected for that purpose by himself,

* 2 Cor. xi. 25.

† Luke xxiii. 24, 23.

358 *On the Resurrection of Christ.*

boldly and resolutely proclaimed to the world. It was in declaring the great truths of that awful scene, that the apostles were so deeply INTERESTED. It was in executing the commands of their divine master, that they were so zealously engaged ; and for this great purpose they were encouraged and supported against every opposition by those mighty signs and wonders, which they were enabled to display. With an undaunted courage they declare to those very rulers, who had clamorously demanded their master's condemnation, and now attempted to muzzle the mouths of the apostles, and to silence the declarations of his disciples,—* “ Whether it be right in
 “ the sight of God, to hearken unto you
 “ more than unto God, judge ye : For we
 “ cannot but speak the things which we
 “ have seen and heard.”

BUT what gave the apostles greater scope for argument, was, that they were able to declare his Resurrection from that death,

* Acts iv. 19, 20.

to which these rulers had condemned him. It was this which armed them with additional courage. It was this which made the apostle express himself so emphatically in the remarkable words of the text ; “ It is “ Christ that died,” and hath taken away the sentence of condemnation : and he enforces it with this additional reason, “ Yea, “ rather, that is risen again,” as if the former would have been productive of no good effects without the latter, and as if the resurrection of Christ from the dead was of more weight and importance than even his death and passion.

AND here we may, and perhaps ought to observe a very essential distinction, of great practical import to Christians in general. It was the DEATH and PASSION of our Saviour, in which the atonement was made for the sins of mankind ; but it is in his RESURRECTION, that the great argument is to be found, which is more immediately calculated to influence our conduct and practice effectually and efficaciously.

360 *On the Resurrection of Christ.*

ciouſly. And it ſhould ſeem that the apoſtle purpoſely intended, in condeſcenſion to human infirmities and prejudices, to place the energy of this doctrine of redemption upon THAT, which has the beſt tendency to engage men's affections; without reſting too ſtrictly on the caſuiſtical or metaphyſical diſtinction and diſcrimination of theſe two great articles of our faith. He was ſenſible that mankind in general were unable to diſtinguiſh thus nicely and ſubtilly, and that eternal ſalvation could never be deſigned to hinge on ſo precarious and doubtful a tenure; and although he does not loſe ſight of rigid truth, and the efficacy of our Saviour's death and ſufferings, in which the redemption of the human race conſiſted, yet he chuſes to accommodate himſelf to the capacity of the general body of Chriſtians, as far as he ſafely might, and ſo to lay the great ſtreſs and benefit of his atonement on his reſurrection,—“ Yea, “ rather, that is riſen again.”

INDEED

On the Resurrection of Christ. 361

INDEED there are some obvious reasons to be given, exclusive of the sentiments and notions of Christians in general, for this indirect application of the benefits of Christ's passion. The resurrection from the dead was the great act, by which our Saviour proved to his disciples, and through them to all the world, that he had overcome death; and had compleatly triumphed over the dreary horrors of the grave. It is by the resurrection, that we are assured of his having effected the great work of our redemption. By this we know, that death, the great conqueror of mankind, is himself conquered; by this we know, that the great superiority which he obtained over men by the fall of Adam, is extremely lessened, and will in due time be solely and entirely destroyed; and by this we are assured, as our apostle strenuously argues in the * well-known chapter of a most solemn service,—That this resurrection of Christ is † “the first-fruits” only of all that have

* Chapter of the Burial Service.

† 1 Cor. xv. 20.

hitherto

362 *On the Resurrection of Christ.*

hitherto slept in the grave, or shall hereafter sleep,—That it is an earnest of their rising triumphantly over death and the grave * “at the last trump,” — That all who shall be living at that solemn season will escape the sleep of death, but shall † “be fashioned” and changed for those great and important purposes, which will then be consistent with the events of that period. But what these are, it would be presumptuous in us to conjecture, much more dogmatically and positively to insist upon any fancied notions or opinions of our own; and perhaps they may as far exceed the comprehension of our present faculties, as the nature of Angels exceeds that of men.

Thus I have not only allowed, but proved, that the apostles WERE interested in their own cause; but in a manner which shews, that they could not be liable to the smallest suspicion of representing their own history partially and favourably. And to this purpose, we have not only their own

* v. 52.

† v. 51.

testimony

On the Resurrection of Christ. 363

testimony of fidelity and sincerity, since they do not conceal the *failings* of each other ; but the evidence of friends and foes, of the advocates for Christianity, and of the enemies of the gospel. All history is full of their sufferings and martyrdom for the cause of Christ ; of their * “ being “ baptized with the same baptism ” as he himself was “ baptized.” Not only sacred but profane history abounds with almost innumerable instances of this treatment ; and they could not have been so unanimous, in testifying such public and open actions, if they had not really happened. If the advocates for Christianity had attempted to impose upon the world, by giving accounts of false miracles and fictitious histories, Hea-then writers would certainly have exposed the apostles to the strongest suspicions, by a direct contradiction of those accounts ; in which case, the cause they had espoused would have been every where opposed, and

* Mat. xx. 22.

364 *On the Resurrection of Christ.*

it must have shared the common fate of other impostures.

SHOULD it be observed, that the successful imposture of MAHOMET is an objection to this remark, and takes away much of its force and efficacy; I have to answer, that this was accomplished, in a very extraordinary manner, and with all the terror of fire and sword, and that the genius and disposition of the age were extremely favourable for such a purpose. But the religion of CHRIST was propagated in an age of learning and enquiry, when every person was possessed, comparatively understood with respect to different ages, with means of rational investigation; and it disclaimed and discountenanced all aids and assistances of this kind. It addressed itself to the heart, and demanded, by virtue of its own natural and superior excellence, an attention from the world, which was unknown to all former times.

FOR

For it must not be concealed or omitted, that Christianity was propagated and promulged in an age, distinguished for its superior advancement in every branch of useful and polite learning; when the human faculties were at a very high state of cultivation, and when every species of fraud and deception was certain of being strictly scrutinized and examined. In such an age, it made its way against all opposition, by its own native energy and influence on the hearts of men. It was encouraged in a peculiar manner to demand attention, by the power of working miracles to a very astonishing extent; but the credit and authority of its doctrines were always rested on their strict conformity to right reason, and the acknowledged attributes of the Almighty. For if miracles had been essential to Christianity, they would not have ceased on its being established; and this cessation must, therefore, be a convincing argument, that they were never considered as any part of the doctrines of the gospel, but credentials only
vouchsafed

366 *On the Resurrection of Christ.*

vouchsafed by heaven to promote the purposes of the mission. It is of importance to consider the declaration of our Saviour in this respect; * “ If any
“ man will do his will, he shall know of
“ the doctrine whether it be of God, or
“ whether I speak of myself. † Sanctify
“ them through thy truth,” prays he to the father in his last conference, for his disciples: “ thy word is truth.” Make them holy, and just, and good; “ since for their
“ sakes I sanctify myself, that they also
“ might be sanctified through the truth.” The pattern and example of holiness which I have set before my disciples as a living copy, should powerfully operate upon and influence their conduct, to be sanctified and exercised in like manner, in every kind of holiness and virtue.

FOR to draw towards the close of this discourse,—What was the great end and design of our Saviour’s rising again from the dead? Was it not, that we might be en-

* John vii. 17.

† Ch. xvii. 17, 19.

couraged

couraged and supported, to rise from * “ a
“ death of sin unto a life of righteous-
“ ness? † Be ye holy, for I am holy,” is the
language of the scriptures. “ Without
“ holiness no man shall see the Lord.”
He only “ shall enter into the kingdom
“ of heaven, who doeth the will of the
“ father in heaven. If thou wilt enter
“ into life, keep the commandments.” For
holiness is the very end and purpose of our
creation; the sole object of our redemp-
tion. ‡ “ This is the will of God, even
“ our sanctification.” It was to restore
human nature unto the image of God,
which consists in the exercises of reason
and holiness, that the Saviour of mankind
came down from heaven. It was to re-
pair the breach of the Fall of Adam, that
this Saviour died and suffered. It was to
perfect our Redemption, and assure us of
the acceptance of his sacrifice for the sins
of the world, that § “ he rose again from
“ the dead, according to the scripture”

* Church Catechism, and in Romans, *passim*.

† 1 Peter i. 16 — Heb. xii. 14. — Mat. vii. 21. —
xix. 17. ‡ 1 Thes. iv. 3. § 1 Cor. xv. 4.

prophecies,

prophecies, which had been declared of him.

WHAT the apostle observes in another place of this epistle, is particularly applicable to this purpose; that he * “was delivered for our offences, and raised again “for our justification.” And this should teach us, that however our Saviour’s death and sufferings were the great price paid, as the ransom of mankind from the slavery of sin and the dominion of Satan, yet his Resurrection was the great hinge, on which the arguments for holiness were to depend. This was the ground and foundation of all their consolation. It demonstrates in like manner, by an uncontrovertible testimony, that all our pretences of a title to happiness will be ineffectual and unavailing, without a real and actual resurrection in heart and life; that we must live with Christ a life of exemplary virtue and holiness, and die with him to all the dangerous and alluring temptations of the world, the

* Rom. iv. 25.

On the Resurrection of Christ. 369

flesh, and the devil; if we mean to rise with him hereafter in glory, and to have our portion in the number of those for whom he has provided mansions in heaven.

CAN it be necessary to urge more; or to trespass farther on our present portion of time, to induce every one who hears me to begin this renovation of heart and life, by celebrating this anniversary of our blessed Saviour's Resurrection in a becoming manner? Can we need any other motives, to manifest the importance of embracing the present opportunity of feasting at his table, and there confirming our vows and resolutions of duty and obedience?

I MUST close this subject with beseeching Almighty God, * “ the God and father of “ our Lord Jesus Christ,” that he will be pleased to † grant, that the words which have this day, and on this occasion, been delivered, may not barely impress your ears, but enter into your hearts; for the sake of

* 1 Pet. i. 3.

† Post Com. Collect.

370 *On the Resurrection of Christ.*

his merits who rose, as on this day, triumphant over sin and its effects, and thereby gave a deadly blow to the king of terrors ; even for the merits of our blessed Saviour and Redeemer, thy son Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom together with the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, throughout all ages of the church, world without end.

S E R M O N. V.

On the Ascension of our Lord.

PREACHED ON ASCENSION DAY.

LUKE XXIV. 51.

AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHILE HE BLESSED THEM, HE WAS PARTED FROM THEM, AND CARRIED UP INTO HEAVEN.

I N the great and important scheme of human Redemption, it has frequently occurred as a subject of general surprize, that persons professing Christianity should be so grossly inattentive to the duties, which that profession requires of them. For if it is allowable to * “ observe one day above “ another,” it may seem unnecessary to demonstrate the propriety of noticing, in a more particular manner, the several days

* Rom. xiv. 5.

372 *On the Ascension of our Lord.*

which our church has wisely and judiciously retained, and appropriated peculiarly to the various parts of this scheme. Hence I shall consider this observation, in a very distinguished and special view, as a principle or truth, already sufficiently impressed on your minds, not to admit of any doubt or hesitation.

WHEN it is considered, that the grand object of our Saviour's Ascension, was, to complete the mystery of his incarnation, and to perfect the scheme of human Redemption ; it seems very extraordinary, and indeed unaccountable, that we should still want other motives to induce us to commemorate that Ascension ; or that we should be, as Christians, so inattentive to the obligations which this lays upon us, to comply with so reasonable and necessary an institution.

To give due weight and importance to this motive of obedience ; I shall briefly bring forward to your recollection the objects

jects proposed by that church, of which we are members, in observing those days more especially, which are appropriated to commemorate the leading and distinct characters of this Redemption. On the anniversary of our Saviour's NATIVITY, we bless and praise God for his infinite goodness, in sending his son into the world, to undertake our redemption from the slavery of sin; and we join the song of angels, and say, * "GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, "AND ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD-WILL "TOWARDS MEN." On the day of his PASSION or crucifixion, we express our great and pungent sorrow for those sins of mankind, which brought upon him such a cruel affliction; and meditate on the grievous sufferings of that painful and ignominious death, wherein all nature took so serious a part, that it was every where convulsed and deranged. On the day of his RESURRECTION, we rejoice in giving thanks for the wonderful display of his power and goodness, in assuring us thereby of his hav-

* Luke ii. 14.

374 *On the Ascension of our Lord.*

ing paid the ransom for our numerous transgressions; of his having overcome the tyranny of death and the power of the grave, and confirming us in the truth of his divine mission. But we ought to contemplate, though it is but too frequently and generally neglected, that in his glorious and wonderful ASCENSION, he demonstrated his possessing THAT power, which he had so long foretold to mankind. And the great end of his thus * “leading captivity” itself “captive,” was to give them an earnest of the accomplishment of those many promises which he had made them; and that he would, in due time, “give gifts “unto men,” which should enable them to triumph over every opposition. His magnificent entry into heaven, ought certainly to be remembered by Christians, with the warmest songs of praise and thanksgiving. This pledge of his exaltation at God’s right hand, or the most honourable station in the court of heaven, † “where “he ever liveth to make intercession for us,”

* Psalm. lxxviii. 18.

† Rom. viii. 34.

should

should surely operate upon our gratitude, and cause it to abound. This birth-day in heaven, if I may be permitted to adopt an expression of the primitive martyrs, in consequence of his having accomplished our redemption; should be celebrated with hosannahs * “to God and to the Lamb, “who now reigneth for ever and ever.”

I WILL not at present spend time in the detail of our Saviour's conduct, from the day of his resurrection to that of his Ascension. Though he frequently conversed with his disciples, during the space or interval of forty days, he did not constantly associate with them, as he had heretofore done. He had now accomplished the great purpose, for which he had been induced to assume the nature of man; and therefore it was necessary to wean his disciples from their temporal and personal attachment to him, by frequent and continued absence at various intervals, to prepare them for the season of his final absence. Of THIS

* Revel. *passim*.

376 *On the Ascension of our Lord.*

he had apprized and forewarned them before his death; * “Hereafter,” says he, “I will not talk much with you,” just so much only as seemed to be necessary, to convince the disciples effectually of the certainty of his resurrection. And it was, as † on this day, that he took his personal leave of those, with whom he had more familiarly conversed before his death; on which occasion, as St. Luke informs us, ‡ “he led them out as far as Bethany,” to his usual resort on Mount Olivet, where “he lift up his hands, and blessed them.” And in the very act of pronouncing his benediction upon them, “he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven;” and, as the evangelist elsewhere expresses it, “a cloud received him out of their sight.” But, as it follows, as soon as “they” had “worshipped him, they returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.” And indeed, great reason

* John xiv. 30. † The day of his ascension.

‡ Ch. xxiv. 47—53.—Acts i. 9, 8.

for such a conduct, and for such a joy, had they, to whom the promises of such a power had been given with his parting breath. “ Behold, I send the promise of
“ my father upon you ; but tarry ye in the
“ city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued
“ with power from on high. Ye shall
“ receive power, after that the Holy Ghost
“ is come upon you : and ye shall be wit-
“ nesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and
“ in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the
“ uttermost parts of the earth.”

AND this was ONE great purpose, for which our Saviour's Ascension into heaven, was necessary. * “ It is expedient for you,” says he to his disciples, “ that I go away ;
“ for if I go not away, the Comforter will
“ not come unto you, but if I depart, I
“ will send him unto you. For I have yet
“ many things to say unto you, but ye
“ cannot bear them now :” you must first be weaned from those prejudices, which you still entertain, and which only the

* John xvi. 7, 12, 13, 22.

378 *On the Ascension of our Lord.*

event of things can remove from your minds, and *time* alone remove the veil which hangs before your eyes. “ But when the spirit “ of truth is come,” which must INDEED be a comforter, “ he will guide you into “ all truth ; for he shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that “ shall he speak.” Those truths, which it is not now so expedient for me to declare to you, he will supply abundantly ; the season will then be more proper for discovering them, and the change of circumstances, which will have occurred at that season, will prepare you the better to receive them. You will want no other aids, for the purpose of executing your mission ; but every thing which your station in life shall render necessary, will be bestowed upon you in full and sufficient measure. “ For “ though ye now, therefore, have sorrow, “ I will see you again, and your heart shall “ rejoice ; and your joy,” which ye then shall feel and experience, “ shall no man “ take from you.”

ANOTHER

ANOTHER important purpose of his leaving the world, was,—that he might ensure a reception in heaven for all his faithful followers and servants. * “In my father’s house are many mansions,” says he; “if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you; I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” And it certainly must give us inexpressible pleasure and satisfaction, to be assured, as we are, on the unerring authority of divine truth, that if we follow him in the paths of obedience here, we shall be translated to a state of inconceivable joy and happiness in his kingdom hereafter. That he has also taken possession of it for us, and thereby secured our title to it; that our inheritance, by his ascension into heaven, should thus, as it were, be entailed upon us;—is something so encouraging, and so highly does it excite our fullest obedience and most dutiful submission, that the subject seems to soar beyond the

* Ch. xiv. 2, 3.

380 *On the Ascension of our Lord.*

power of language to follow it. It is declared indeed, both by a prophet and an apostle, that * “eye hath not seen, neither
 “hath ear heard, the things which God
 “hath prepared for them that love him.”
 And as St. PETER observed, relating to the resurrection, the argument for which is much heightened by his ascension, which more nearly shews us the prospect and means of its completion, † “We are be-
 “gotten again unto a lively hope, by the
 “resurrection of Jesus Christ from the
 “dead: Unto an inheritance, incorrupti-
 “ble, and undefiled, and that fadeth not
 “away, reserved in heaven for us.”

To us, perhaps, who have so long been in possession of the comforter, and for whose coming the ascension was preparatory, it may seem, as many have been induced inconsiderately to argue, an unnecessary duty to commemorate that ascension, by those who already experience the effects of it: But to this kind of argu-

* Isa. lxiv. 4.—1 Cor. ii. 9. † 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

On the Ascension of our Lord. 381

ment little need be observed or opposed, except to make one general remark, that it would supersede the expediency of commemorating the Nativity, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection; it would entirely set aside all the important services of our church, in which those remarkable events of our Saviour's history, are preserved and remembered with the solemnity which is requisite; it would operate, in a most essential manner to the disadvantage of the pure and unmixed doctrines of the gospel, which these services have a most happy tendency to preserve.

UNWILLING to suppose, that many of those persons who are in the habit of disregarding these solemn services have any other motive than the love of truth; and being ready to allow, that custom, perhaps, or a misconceived idea of confining ourselves strictly to scripture rules alone, has operated powerfully to influence the conduct of a great number of well-disposed Christians; I am charitably led to form a
favourable

favourable opinion of the motives of their actions. But it is a very improper mode of reasoning, which gave rise to these notions ; and, in the first instance, must be attributed to a certain restraint, or incapacity of the faculties to judge of things comprehensively and at large. The passions, too, must be admitted to their share of the cause ; and, serving as prompters to stimulate and push forward the arrangement of ideas, imbibed and fostered from these contracted and limited principles, the source of errors and mistakes is sufficiently manifest, without imputing to any persons the unpleasing character of an intention to mislead.

FROM such premises it is easy to conceive, how these notions are propagated by the force of education. Accustomed to hear only such sentiments as are entirely correspondent with these tenets, prejudices naturally steal into the mind, without any design or intention of the persons who retain them. This accounts for the
rise

rise and progress, as well as the present continuance, of errors in the doctrine and discipline of the Christian church; it was this contracted mode of determining, which made the early Corinthians declare, * “I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos;” it was this which FIRST occasioned a diversity of sentiments and opinions in the early ages amongst those who professed the same faith; it is the same principle which STILL supports and upholds the distinction, which is so unnatural to the genius of the gospel, and affords so much ground for the triumphs of infidelity.

THE Christian church, considered as a society, must have laws and regulations for its orderly government, as well as other societies. Kingdoms and states have laws, to direct and engage all their subjects; particular classes and lesser societies, though subordinate to the government under which they live, have their peculiar ordinances and directions, for the service of their own

* 1 Cor. iii. 4.

members ; even private associations, which are formed for mutual advantage and security, have their articles and conditions, to which they must submit and conform. It is equally necessary in the discipline of the Christian church. But the New Testament, the general law of the professors of Christianity, has not provided such laws ; individually considered, its doctrines come home to the hearts of men ; but as a society, union and harmony only are generally recommended. A regular government, and an orderly arrangement into the form of a society, were nevertheless necessary ; but the nature of society was well known, and a proper disposition for that purpose was a natural effect, as soon as the condition of Christianity would admit. In having recourse to history, we find that such an effect DID actually follow ; and all the forms and adjustments of society were consequently introduced into the practice of Christians.

I HAVE

I HAVE digressed in some measure from the immediate object of the text, to notice the impropriety of opposing the wisdom of our church, in appointing special and solemn services for the more remarkable events of our Saviour's incarnation. But I have done this principally, with a view to demonstrate how exceedingly advisable and important it is, that Christians should eagerly comply with this appointment, and heartily support the due observance of it, on this and all similar occasions. Hence it must be manifest, that the act of commemorating so signal an event as this of the Ascension, is highly worthy of our most serious attention. For it seems to be the boundary between earth and heaven; and to connect the two great objects of our Saviour's goodness to mankind. It seems to be the band of union between time and eternity, and tends to fix in our hearts this most important consideration, that this life is only a temporary situation, in which we are concerned to prepare for a more lasting and durable one.

C c

W e

WE cannot better conceive the design and intention of our church in this day's service, than by the particular collect which she has prepared for the use of her members. It directs us to pray, that our "belief" of this "Ascension" of our Saviour "into the heavens, may" lead us "also thither to ascend in heart and mind, "and with him continually to dwell" And the epistle and gospel, selected to accompany it, contain the history of his Ascension, and the final commission given to the apostles, to preach the gospel of Christ; for on THAT account also we may very suitably employ ourselves in this day's commemoration, to remind us, particularly as ministers, of the authority under which we are appointed to preach the gospel. And surely, if WE in particular, as ministers, may find cause to rejoice at and commemorate this original commission to his apostles and their successors, we may also discover in general, as disciples, abundant reason to express our grateful acknowledgments of his goodness to mankind.

AND

AND what more suitable methods could she take, to induce her members seriously and faithfully to discharge their duty as Christians. By converting this historical account of our Saviour's Ascension, into an argument for the spiritual and metaphorical ascension of our hearts, from the groveling and terrestrial things of the present life to the noble and elevated concerns of a future life ; does it not effectually induce us to practise those commands, which every where abound in the scriptures ? For what other tendency has that direction of our Saviour, but this ; * “ Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven ?” ---Or that of St Paul, † “ Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.”

LET us then learn from his ‡ “ example to follow his steps,” and, through his merits, to secure our inheritance in a future state ; which God grant, for his

* Matt. vi. 20.

† Col. iii. 2.

‡ 1 Pet. ii. 21.

388 *On the Ascension of our Lord.*

fake, to whom, together with the Holy Ghost, be ascribed all honour and glory, world without end.

S E R M O N VI.

PREACHED ON WHIT-SUNDAY, 1792,
in the Parish Church of Charles, Plymouth.

On the Promise of the Comforter.

LUKE XXIV. 49.

BEHOLD, I SEND THE PROMISE OF MY
FATHER UPON YOU: BUT TARRY YE
IN THE CITY OF JERUSALEM, UNTIL
YE BE ENDUED WITH POWER FROM
ON HIGH.

FROM the words which have just been
read to you, as the subject of our re-
flections for this day, two things very ob-
viously strike our attention in a forcible
manner. It is a natural enquiry, what
“ the promise of the father,” which is
here mentioned, could allude to; and what
“ the power from on high,” with which
they were hereafter to be “ endued.”

THAT they were of considerable import and magnitude, is manifest from the introduction of this observation. Whatever direction is prefaced and introduced by the word *behold*, has always some very interesting and extraordinary meaning attached to it. Designed as it is to engage the affections, and to attract the attention of mankind, we are naturally induced from its obvious purport in common speech, to give a more than ordinary consideration to the passages and expressions, before which it is prefixed.

WHAT this promise of his father was, which he promised to send to them for their assistance and encouragement, specially considered, may not perhaps be very easy to determine. It might be well known to the apostles and immediate disciples of our Lord; who, in recording the history of his life and conversation, with the plain and simple doctrines which he taught, might not think it necessary to mention it in express language, or, if they have mentioned

tioned it, not to have related the matter so clearly as to point out the reference any otherwise than by induction and comparison.

It may be thought a matter of much importance, to attend to the nature of the expression which is recorded in the former part of the text, "I send the promise of my father upon you ;" I do not say that I will interceed with the Almighty to bestow this blessing and advantage upon you. It does not depend on the will of another ; it is not a promise, of the accomplishment of which you may have any reason to doubt, as interfering with the designs of any superior disposition or authority ; but * " I

" MYSELF

* The Rev. Mr. Hawker, Vicar of Charles, Plymouth, has so fully enlarged on our Saviour's divinity, and the great doctrines of redemption, atonement, &c. that I have been precluded from expatiating on these subjects. I beg, therefore, to refer my readers to that excellent work, " Sermons on the Divinity of Christ, by Robert Hawker, printed for J. Deighton, Holborn, 1792." *passim*, but especially in Ser-

“ MYSELF fend this promise,” and your abundant knowledge of the veracity and certainty of my assertions, even the most extraordinary and unexampled, is a test of its being effected. As surely as you have been witnesses of my having performed every thing, which I have brought forward for your notice and observation; so certainly may you depend upon this farther act of my benevolence and kindness to you.

FROM the concluding words of St. Matthew’s gospel, some probable information may be collected on this subject. He there

mon VI. p. 222, to p. 232, and p. 236, &c. The same reason has prevented me from adding a Sermon on Col. ii. 8. preached in the parish church of Charles, aforesaid, and in the parish church of Stoke-Damarell, the parish church of Plymouth Dock, immediately subsequent to the riots of Birmingham in 1791. Its object was to shew from scripture, and acknowledged premises, that the Trinitarian doctrine is founded on the purest reason.

exhorts

exhorts the disciples to * “go and teach all
“nations, to observe all things whatsoever”
he himself had “commanded” for their
direction and rule of conduct; and, for their
encouragement against all opposition, he
adds these very important words, “lo, I
“am with you alway, even unto the end
“of the world.” Though we must not
pretend to say absolutely, that the words of
the text have a reference to this promise, it
is undoubtedly an application very justifi-
fiable, and perfectly consistent with our
Saviour’s character and the œconomy of
human redemption.

OR, perhaps, we may with propriety re-
fer it to that declaration of our Saviour to
Peter, after he had affirmed that he was
† “the Christ, the Son of the living
“God.” For the very just and proper
sentiment which this disciple had enter-
tained and expressed of his master, a blef-
sing is pronounced and confirmed; and he
adds these remarkable and encouraging, as

* Mat. xxviii. 19, 20.

† Mat. xvi. 16, 18, 19.

well as instructive words, " I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock," that faith and confidence which thou hast now declared, " I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven ; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." To this promise, it is very natural to suppose, our Saviour might also have reference in the expression of the text ; which is the more probable, as that church which he had engaged to Peter and the rest of the apostles, was not only to be built on that faith in him as the Son of God, but was on the eve of being formed and raised for the benefit and information of the world.

MANY other passages of a similar import might be produced, any one of which taken singly, and much more all of them when taken collectively, would be sufficient

ficient to justify the application of the first part of the text ; and as this was the principal object which I had in view, enough has been said already to demonstrate what was proposed generally. In passing on to the latter part, it may be considered specially, as relating to some more particular and distinct branches of this promise ; which we are in the next place to notice and regard, as essential to our present subject, and peculiarly applicable to the appointed service of our church on this day.

BUT before we proceed, I think it not improper to consider the direction of our Saviour to his disciples, to “ tarry in the “ city of Jerusalem,” until that season in which this promise should be conferred upon them, and these powers with which they were to be endued should be sent to them from heaven. Our Saviour had assured them before his sufferings, that * “ it was “ expedient for them that he went away ; “ for if,” says he, “ I go not away, the “ Comforter will not come to you ; but “ if I depart, I will send him to you.

* John xvi. 7.—xiv. 16, 17, 26.

“ I will

“ I will pray the Father, and he shall give
 “ you another Comforter, that he may
 “ abide with you for ever: Even the
 “ spirit of truth. The Comforter, which
 “ is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will
 “ send in my name, he shall teach you all
 “ things, and bring all things to your re-
 “ membrance, whatsoever I have said
 “ unto you.”

For the purpose of receiving such power, as would be productive of these happy effects, the text observes that our Saviour directed his disciples to “ tarry in Jerusalem.” Many other important purposes also were to be answered by this power, thus promised to the disciples of Jesus, and secured to them by his unquestionable authority and veracity.
 * “ When this Comforter is come, he will
 “ reprove,” or as it should be expressed, convince “ the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Of sin, because
 “ they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my father, and ye

* Ch. xvi. 8—13.

“ see

“ see me no more ; of Judgment, because
“ the prince of this world is judged.”
After which he adds, to raise their expectations, and still farther to excite their attention and regard. “ I have yet many
“ things to say unto you, but ye cannot
“ bear them now ;” you must not suppose that these form the whole of that guide and direction which is necessary for your conduct. But they are fully sufficient for your present purpose ; and the season will come, when more extensive displays of the divine wisdom and goodness will be manifested, and when you shall more and more be satisfied with the reasons of every thing in which I have instructed you. “ When he,
“ the spirit of truth, is come,” the Comforter, of whom I have before spoken,
“ he will guide you into all truth ; for he
“ shall not speak of himself, but whatsoever
“ he shall hear, that shall he speak ; and he
“ will shew you things to come.”

PERHAPS I have said enough to point out the very high grounds and expectations

tions, which the apostles and disciples of our Lord were instructed to entertain of the effects of this power, thus fully and pointedly promised to his followers. It may now be proper to consider the accomplishment of these promises, as it affected the apostles and disciples of that age, and afterwards related to their successors, in which Christians of the present times are to be included and comprehended.

To the former, it must be fully sufficient to recite the history of that event. St. Luke has very particularly described it, with many consequences of which it was productive. * “When the day of Pentecost” or the feast of weeks, says he, “was fully come,” the apostles, and probably many of the other disciples “were all † with one accord in one place. And suddenly

* Acts ii. 1—8.

† The disciples of our Lord, from the time of his passion, never neglected to assemble together, to exercise themselves in acts of devotion. We read particularly of their assembling at “evening, for fear of the
“ Jews,

“ suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a * rushing mighty wind, and
“ it filled all the house where they were
“ sitting. And there appeared unto them
“ † cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it
“ sat

“ Jews, on the first day of the week,” in commemoration of our Saviour’s rising from the dead on that day. On several occasions of this nature, he appeared to the disciples, and convinced them of his being actually risen, by every demonstration of which their senses could be judges.

* This might be of so extraordinary a nature, and so singular in its operation, as to excite the general amazement of the whole city, and perhaps the adjacent villages. That people of so many different nations should be so readily convened to one place, in the midst of so large a city, and at a time when such great numbers were collected from every quarter; can only be accounted for by admitting that the cause of it must have been proportioned and adequate. Perhaps it is more easy to conceive the nature of such a phænomenon, as might occasion this consternation, and immediately discover where its effects terminated; than to satisfy all classes and descriptions of Christians; and therefore I will not trouble my readers with any specious conjectures, but only say in general, that to account for it admits of little difficulty.

† Some have inferred that the appendage of the band,

“ sat upon each of them. And they were
 “ all filled with the Holy Ghost, and be-
 “ gan to speak with other tongues, as the
 “ spirit gave them utterance.” This was
 the fact; this the manner in which the
 promise was originally accomplished: and
 the amazement which it occasioned is mani-
 fest from what follows, that “ when this
 “ was noised abroad,” as such a wonderful
 and unheard of occurrence must needs be a
 subject of surprize and astonishment, “ the
 “ multitude came together” to be person-
 ally assured of so strange a phænomenon.
 It is added naturally, that “ they were con-
 “ founded, because that every man heard
 “ them speak in his own language. And

band, which is worn equally by clergymen of the
 established church, and all teachers amongst dissenters
 who have received, what they term, a regular ordi-
 nation, is an emblem of this appearance, at the first
 descent of the Holy Spirit. Admitting this, it is na-
 tural to consider it as a monitory requisite in the dress
 of an ambassador of that divine spirit; to whose plea-
 sure as Christians, they should constantly conform,
 and whose will, as his ministers, they should faithfully
 declare.

“ they

“ they were all amazed, and marvelled,
“ saying one to another, Behold” ye not
this extraordinary fact, as a matter of very
serious consideration ? “ Are not all these
“ which speak, Galileans ? And how hear
“ we every man in our own tongue where-
“ in we were born ?”

ASTONISHING indeed must this have been,
when a few despised Galileans, who had so
lately lost their master, and, as was gene-
rally understood, in so disgraceful and in-
famous a way that they had not since pub-
licly held up their heads ; were endued
with such remarkable powers, and in so
remarkable a manner. This was still fresh
in every one’s memory ; and must, doubt-
less, occasion still greater surprize in all
who compared or considered that event
with the present. It would lead to a re-
flection on the life and conduct of that
Master, whose cause they still seemed to
maintain. For this was not manifested to
a few prejudiced Jews only, who, to
smother the atrocity of their own conduct,

D d

might,

might, as formerly, be tempted to suborn witnesses to pervert this occurrence; but as the history of our Saviour's death by the ignominious mode of crucifixion at the preceding great feast of the passover, was known to the profelytes of the Jewish religion from every country, and as they could not be ignorant of the confusion which was occasioned by the report of his resurrection,—this manifestation of the divine presence, so visible to all, was likewise displayed at a public festival, when strangers from every country were assembled. Not only Jews, from every part of Jerusalem, were collected; but * “Par-
 “ thians, and Medes, and Elamites, and
 “ the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in
 “ Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and
 “ Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt,
 “ and in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene,
 “ and strangers” even from “Rome, Jews
 “ and Profelytes” from every nation,
 “ Cretes and Arabians.” All these people

* Acts ii. 9—13.

were

were assembled, and became witnesses of this surprising event; and all gave testimony of hearing them speak in their “respective tongues” and languages “the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed,” as well they might, “and were in doubt,” saying one to another, “What meaneth this?” What indeed could such an extraordinary occurrence denote? Conjecture may devise, but it must be bewildered; and defamation and envy may be ready to assert, that such “Men were full of new wine.” But to such a calumny it was easy to reply. The Gentile proselyte must be satisfied with this natural and obvious reason, that “it was but the third hour of the day” when this happened; and it was very improbable, therefore, that men should be overtaken with the effects of indulgence in the luxury of drinking. The Jew was attacked with a stronger argument; that it was no less than the accomplishment of a very distinguishing prophecy, with which they had long been fully acquainted.

* “ This is that which was spoken by the
“ prophet Joel, And it shall come to pass
“ in the last days, saith God, I will pour
“ out my spirit upon all flesh : and your
“ sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
“ and your young men shall see visions,
“ and your old men shall dream dreams ;
“ And on my servants, and on my hand-
“ maidens will I pour out in those days of
“ my spirit ; and they shall prophesy.
“ And I will shew wonders in heaven
“ above, and signs in the earth beneath ;
“ blood and fire, and vapour of smoke.
“ The sun shall be turned into darkness,
“ and the moon into blood, before that
“ great and terrible day of the Lord come.
“ And it shall come to pass that whoso-
“ ever shall call on the name of the Lord,
“ shall be saved.”

SUCH was the accomplishment, and such
the nature of that “ Promise of the Father,”
which our Saviour engaged to send to his

* Acts ii. 16—21. com. with Joel ii. 28—32.

disciples.

disciples. They now no longer remained silent, in expectation of farther communications; but they embraced the opportunity which was now offered them, of preaching to a mixed assembly the necessity of faith and confidence in their crucified master. They were convinced that they had now received the power which was promised to them. They could declare the history of Christ's life, his passion, and resurrection, to all the world; and the very act of their speaking whatever language was necessary, was so forcible an argument of their being assisted by divine power, that it commanded universal attention.

THE first fruits of this extraordinary scene were, as might be expected, signal and remarkable. St. Peter very powerfully commences this date of their spiritual inauguration, with relating briefly the life and death of his blessed Lord; and, after he had applied a prophecy of David to

that purpose, declares, * “ This Jesus hath
 “ God raised up, whereof we all are wit-
 “ nesses. Therefore being by the right
 “ hand of God exalted, and having re-
 “ ceived of the Father the Promise of the
 “ Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this,
 “ which ye now see and hear. For Da-
 “ vid is not ascended into the heavens ;
 “ but he saith himself, † The Lord said
 “ unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right
 “ hand, until I make thy foes thy foot-
 “ stool. Therefore, let all the house of
 “ Israel know assuredly, that God hath
 “ made that same Jesus whom ye have
 “ crucified, both Lord and Christ.” This
 was a bold and daring charge against a
 whole nation, which only matter of fact
 could justify, and the utmost resolution
 and fortitude maintain. But it was a fact,
 which was fresh in the minds of all ; the
 whole scene had elapsed but seven weeks,
 and could not be forgotten ‡. All indeed

* Acts ii. 32, &c.

† Ps. cx. 1.

‡ See Mr. Hawker's Sermons, who has enlarged
 on this subject, serm. VII. p. 277, &c.

were

were conscious of it ; and, on the supposition of his divine authority, the thoughts of that barbarous and ungrateful transaction must strike them with horror and confusion.

OF this consequence, too, we are fully assured from the subsequent relation. * “ When they heard this,” says the same inspired writer, “ they were pricked in “ their heart ; and said unto Peter, and to “ the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do ? Then Peter “ said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of “ Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, “ and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy “ Ghost. For the promise” of the Father, declared in the text, “ is unto you and to “ your children, and to all that are afar “ off” to the most distant generations, “ even as many as the Lord our God shall “ call. Then they that gladly received his “ word were baptized ; and the same day

* Acts ii. 37, 38, 39, 41.

“ there were added unto them about three
“ thousand souls.”

CONCERNING the accomplishment of this promise to the apostles we have now sufficiently enlarged. But it was to extend to their posterity after them; and of this also we have abundant evidence both from reason and history. With the exception only of miracles, in which the gift of tongues may be comprehended; what advantages had the apostles by this accomplishment, that we have not? The gift of tongues, which was an effect of this manifestation of the spirit of truth, gave them confidence and assurance in the doctrine of their master, which before they wanted. Our Saviour himself had told them, in a very trying scene, before his passion, that * “ the spirit was willing, “ but the flesh was weak;” and therefore, at the time of his ascension, he commands them expressly to “ tarry in the “ city of Jerusalem, until they were en-

* Mat. xxvi. 41.

“ dued

“ dued with power from on high” to conquer that weakness. The spirit of truth was * “ to convince the world of sin, of “ righteousness, and of judgment ;” and was not this fully manifested in Peter’s defence of himself and his associates from the calumnious charge of drunkenness on this occasion ? Did he not by this effusion of the spirit receive that confidence and assurance, in which he before had so grossly failed ? Did he not hereby acquire boldness and resolution to speak and declare facts of the most disagreeable nature ? and was he not enabled to prove to the conviction of thousands the divine mission of his master, and to supply persons of the various nations we have already noted with means of applying the ancient prophecies of scripture to the wonderful occurrences of the life and death of Jesus ? And does not this confidence and assurance of faith operate equally on Christians now ? Does not this “ promise of the Father,” extend itself visibly to the present day ? Are we not

* John xvi. 8.

convinced of the truth and certainty of the Christian Revelation? and does not the knowledge of our interest in it endue us with power to persevere in its directions? Upon Christians, who consider what their profession requires of them, this **MUST** and **WILL** be the effect.

MIRACLES, it is acknowledged, we do not perform; nor are they needful for any permanent purposes of Christianity. The gift of tongues was peculiarly necessary in the first ages of the gospel; and by such means only could that gospel be propagated to the distant corners of the earth. But when this was effected, the miracle ceased; and the gospel was left to maintain its ground by its own native simplicity and purity, and the corroborating testimony of its history. And as Christianity became the established religion of nations and kingdoms, other extraordinary powers gave way, as being now no longer necessary.

MINUTE

MINUTE and critical enquiries into the operations of the Holy Ghost on the minds of Christians in the present age, can scarcely be requisite. Perhaps it may with great truth be concluded, that such subtle disquisitions are generally more dangerous than useful.

WE know in general, that the design of the Holy Ghost, by inspiring us with such confidence and resolution to pursue the Almighty's pleasure, is * “to sanctify and
“renew our corrupt nature, and to restore it to its primitive perfection and
“dignity. For without holiness it is impossible to please God, or attain that
“happiness which consists in the enjoyment of him.” Without this conformity to the divine nature, in vain shall we ever hope for salvation. By such a restoration to the image of God, in which we were originally created, we can alone

* Nelson on the Festivals and Fasts.

do him honour, and manifest a veneration for his dignity!

AND to effect this very important object of our Being, the spirit of God, in mercy and compassion to fallen man, hath given us an earnest of his residing in our hearts, and encouraging the divine principle of reason to assert its prerogative, and to curb and restrain the clamours and acclamations of the senses. Hence it is that we are enabled to form such ideas of the necessity of faith and confidence in the Almighty's promises, as will not only excite us to a vigilant care and circumspection, but support us under the difficulties and afflictions of life; it will impel us to acts of kindness and generosity to our fellow-creatures, as far as the means of Providence will prudently permit us; and it will give such a firmness and stability to all our conduct, as will prove that we are not Christians in name only, * “but in deed and “in truth.” Our duty to God, our neigh-

* 1 John iii. 18.

bour,

bour, and ourselves, will be so happily
tempered and united, that we need not
doubt of a blessed eternity if we * “hold
“ this beginning of our confidence sted-
“ fast unto the end.”

* Heb. iii. 6.

S E R M O N VII.

PREACHED ON THE FAST-DAY,

APRIL 19, 1793.

to two Country Congregations in the
County of Wilts.

Religion the best Security of a State.

EXOD. v. 2.

AND PHARAOH SAID, WHO IS THE
LORD, THAT I SHOULD OBEY HIS
VOICE, TO LET ISRAEL GO? I KNOW
NOT THE LORD, NEITHER WILL I
LET ISRAEL GO.

THERE is no person, I presume,
who has at all attended to the
history of the present times, who can
be at a loss for motives to demonstrate
the propriety of the text on the present
occasion. Through a period of more
E c 2 than

than three thousand years since that time, there has not, perhaps, occurred an instance so nearly similar to that alluded to in these words of Pharaoh, as the distracted state of a neighbouring nation has for some time past, and still but too unhappily affords us.

The sentiment expressed in the text conveys an idea the most shocking and repugnant to a serious and reflecting mind, which can well be conceived. "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?—I know not the Lord," are expressions of so dreadful a sound in the ears of persons who have any sparks of religion in their minds, that we shudder at the recital, and naturally and easily foresee the consequences.—When a mind is so far divested of all sense of dependence on a superior Being, as to declare itself in such a language of defiance, we cannot suppose that it will submit to any controul, or acknowledge any law but that of its own will. In
vain

vain must it be to expect it should possess any principle of submission or obedience, but what the prevailing power and force of others compels it to, or to which its own inability reluctantly obliges it.

From the time of the first message to Pharaoh by Moses to the period of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, the conduct of the tyrant towards this oppressed people is entirely illustrative of this observation. Not the smallest traits of justice, of equity, or of mercy, are to be found in his character; but a wicked and cruel policy, and a rigid and arbitrary power, distinguish all his proceedings, and become the sole guide and direction to all his actions.

Wherever men, in like manner, have been found, who have cast off the sense of religion and a superior Being, and divested themselves of the idea of a superintending and controuling Providence;

dence; the histories of all ages abundantly assure us, that the same unjust, inequitable, cruel, and inhuman conduct has ever been the result. What else can reasonably be expected to ensue from a mind, which has discarded the only cementing principle of society? a principle, which alone can be secured by religion, and which equally obliges the monarch and the peasant to the cultivation and discharge of duties that only can be productive of their mutual comfort and satisfaction.

To a just and proper sense of this duty, either in a religious capacity, as depending on the acknowledgment of a supreme, providential, and controuling Being—or in a civil relation, as it only regards the welfare and benefit of society (though it requires some refinement to separate what appears to have a natural and necessary connection), all subordination of inferiors is to be attributed, and all equity and moderation of superi-

ors

ors to be accounted for. A true spirit of religion always operates to the benefit and advantage of society. The general principle, which it strongly inculcates, of doing to others as we would wish to be done unto, has a prevailing influence on every individual member of society, in their respective stations, to excite them to a just and equitable discharge of their duty.

Take away religion, on the contrary, from the mind of man, and you will take away the strongest security of civil society. Disorder and confusion must unavoidably and of necessity ensue from the speculative vagaries of a fertile mind, unrestrained by any superior and controuling fixed principles of conduct.

In every species of government, the different effects of which it is productive, are more commonly to be attributed to the influence of religion, than to any cause merely of a political nature.

On the present occasion, however, I mean not to trouble you with historical deductions, to demonstrate the truth of this position; but this declaration I may and dare confidently make, that the blessings of every government, considered in a general and national view, are proportionate to the purity of the religion they profess, when aided by the practical obedience of its subjects.

Regarding ourselves as christians, and in that respect possessing a public character, in maintaining and supporting which we ought zealously to persevere; does not the religion, to which we have been educated, amply display to us the advantages of society, by a due subordination of inferiors to superiors, in which the very essence of society must consist? If we will but take our bibles in our hands, and observe the numerous changes and revolutions of states and kingdoms; if we farther attend to their public and national character, with a
view

view to ascertain the causes of such changes and revolutions ; and if we will but employ ourselves sincerely and honestly, in deducing from the facts which will thereby be afforded us a rule of conduct for our direction and guidance ;—the conclusion from this research is obvious—that a revolt from their allegiance and obedience to the Almighty is the prominent feature, and the universal cause of their destruction and overthrow.

This position is therefore unquestionable—that religion alone can secure any permanent happiness to a nation. To which we must add, which will readily be suggested to us on a more particular and minute enquiry, that it is not a matter of indifference what religion we profess, as some amongst us have weakly asserted ; for we shall perceive, that nations have also frequently suffered from such corruptions in religion as naturally defaced its image, instead of reflecting

flecting that honour on the Almighty which ought to distinguish it.

Scripture and history concur in assuring us, that corruptions in religion have also been productive of the most serious effects. How many have been the massacres and persecutions, which have arisen from this fertile source of evils and misfortunes to mankind?—How many dreadful and destructive wars have been occasioned by illiberal prejudices, and a gross violation of the pure and genuine principles of reason, under the specious pretence of religion? But to the question which naturally ensues from these reflections,—Is religion productive of all these evils? I answer, No; it is not religion, but the headstrong passions and corruptions of men's minds which have gained the ascendancy of reason and a true sense of duty, and thereby tyrannize over the world under her garb and assumed appearance. It is to a want of pure and undisguised religion

ligion that such proceedings are to be attributed ; and religion ought not to be blamed for disorders and confusions in the world, of which it is not productive. For we should ever distinguish what religion requires of us, as it may be deduced from the law of nature, and our relative situation as created beings ; what it farther requires of us, as the Almighty by various means and “at sundry times” hath revealed his will to us, which must always be consistent with those laws and that situation, though much more positive and explicit in the most essential duties of obedience ; and what it still farther calls upon us to submit to, more immediately as relating to the infinite nature of God, and the finite and limited capacities and comprehensions of men. Such is our duty ; and in our misapprehension or irregular and unwarrantable application of the revealed will of God, relative to this duty, the fertile source of our numerous errors,
and

and of the confusion and disorder they are productive of in the world, will most certainly be found.

It may suffice to say, in the language of the apostle, that "God never left himself without witness." The regular and orderly course of nature was ever manifest to the reflecting mind, and gave the strongest notices and intimations of a superior agent to direct the government of the world. There was ever cause abundant, that the hearts of men should be "filled with joy and gladness" from the regular, seasonable, and bountiful supplies of the good things of life for their accommodation and support; but history informs us, that when they were full, and abounded with blessings for their comfort and satisfaction, they frequently, and most ungratefully, "forgot that God was their Saviour, and that the High God was their Redeemer."

Such

Such has been the complexion of the world, from the beginning of time to the present day. If a haughty Pharaoh was ignorant of God, it was not for want of means, but of inclination to discover it; he wished to know no one greater than himself, not even the omnipotent Creator of all things; and therefore he seems to have persuaded himself into the belief that there was none greater. His next business was, to engage others to the same belief; and therefore he sternly resists the motive assigned by Moses, for requesting permission to sacrifice to their God, in the language which is expressed by the words of my text. For Moses had no sooner delivered his message to this self-important prince, "Thus saith the Lord " God of Israel, let my people go, that " they may hold a feast unto me in the " wilderness,"—than he takes fire at this presumption; "And Pharaoh said, " who is the Lord, that I should obey " his voice, to let Israel go? I know not " the

“the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.” The very motive which Moses declares for the request, was so directly repugnant to this favourite and flattering notion, by which he considered himself as the greatest of all beings, that it roused every spark of pride and self-importance. To have his first object disputed by an alien people, whom he considered as the slaves of his ambition, was an example to his own people which was not to be suffered. “Get you unto your burdens,” was the discouraging injunction, the unfriendly answer to their request. “Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein,” without permitting any time for relaxation; “and let them not regard vain words,” about sacrificing and going into the desert, instead of attending to their employment.

Hardly as this oppressed people were dealt with, and successfully as the
haughty

haughty Pharaoh resisted their supplications, and disregarded and disowned the existence of their God, when the measure of his iniquity had been completed, and his profitable tyranny had long been preserved and maintained, his punishment advanced with hasty strides towards him, in the progressive but speedy destruction of the verdure, the cattle, his first-born son, and lastly himself, with a numerous host of his chosen people. When the "cry" was so "great" among the Egyptians, that "there was not a house where there was not one dead," the general affliction had a momentary influence in recalling them to reason; but it was no more than momentary, the result and effect of their fear, which just afforded time to give the general orders for the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, to render the destruction of Pharaoh himself, with his chosen courtiers and confidants, more signal and remarkable.

Having

Having thus long dwelt on the general doctrine, that states and societies cannot long subsist without religion; that revolutions have, in various ages, been occasioned by its neglect; and that the case of Pharaoh in the text, which was succeeded by a remarkable and extraordinary destruction, is entirely demonstrative to that purpose; it remains, that I proceed to the occasion of our assembling here at present, and to the application proposed to be made from the subject of the text.

We are called upon, by our gracious sovereign, to deplore the calamities of a war, into which we have been reluctantly driven and compelled by the daring and atrocious conduct of a neighbouring nation. It has heretofore frequently been the misfortune of this kingdom to be involved in such a direful calamity, from the machinations or usurpations of that country, against
which

which we are now forced to draw the sword; but, surely, never was there an instance, in which madness and infatuation were so strongly marked, as on the present occasion. Should I recite to you the various particulars of this series of actions, equally to be lamented as they ought to be detested by the advocates of humanity and religion, it would prevent me from deducing those practical reflections, which ought to be the result of our assembling together at this time. Usurpation, massacres, murders, and regicide, have been the climax, through which those daring invaders of the public peace, both in their own country and throughout Europe, have rapidly advanced in the path of their ambitious projects; invaders, who have dared to avow a defiance of all laws, human and divine; invaders, who have impudently and audaciously declared, like Pharaoh in the text, "Who is the Lord? I know not the Lord;" invaders, who have overturned the government of

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their

their own nation, and, after the most horrid acts, have proceeded to foment, by secret emissaries, and, when that failed, by open declarations, rebellion and anarchy throughout the world.— Can there be a division of sentiment on the subject, to what point all these violations of order must be directed? Can there be a doubt, that if “there is a God that judgeth the earth, that pull-
“eth down one and setteth up another,” he must avenge his own cause, and vindicate his insulted honour, in their downfall and destruction.

In vindication, therefore, of our dearest rights, as men and as members of society, we have been obliged to unsheath the sword of justice, and to fight the battles of the Lord; to hasten to the assistance of our friends and allies, when they were in the extremest danger; and to ward off the blow which was threatened against ourselves, by a timely and seasonable opposition to these awful proceedings.

proceedings. So far, happily, our interposal has contributed, with the divine concurrence, to that success against these unprincipled and barbarous invaders, which has been productive of the happiest effects; and can we possibly doubt of that concurrence, if we keep in view the great principle of our duty, and the obligations which our religion and the laws of our country lay us under?

But as war is ever the scourge of Heaven, to rectify some disorders, or to punish some disobedience, let us enquire to what cause we may reasonably attribute this calamity, as it has extended to this kingdom. Nor can we, I presume, be at any loss, upon a very cursory survey of the transactions of the times, to what cause it may and ought to be attributed. Plainly and obviously as our duty is, upon all occasions, revealed to us in the holy scriptures, so as that "he who runs may read it;" yet

there are not wanting some persons amongst us, whose belief in a providence and a fatal judgment is extremely weak and feeble, and scarce deserving the name of belief. There are not wanting among us many, who have been occupied, and still are constantly exercised, in discussing the tenets of political creeds, who scarcely think at all of their religious creed; and to whom the sacred truths of religion are as strange a subject, as a conversation or discourse in Hebrew or Arabic would be to an audience merely English. But surely this conduct at any time is very slighting and dishonourable to the Almighty, who hath assured us in his word, that "those who honour him he will honour;" and very inconsistent with that duty, which, as his creatures, we owe to him as our creator. And when the "judgments" of God "are in the earth," and his avenging arm is out-stretched to punish the disobedient and rebellious; if "the inhabitants

inhabitants of the world will" not then "learn righteousness," and reflect on the cause and moral source of these public calamities; and if men will not profit from the examples of past times, which are recorded in scripture, and said expressly to be "written for our admonition," how can it otherwise happen, but that the Almighty, unless he should be false to his own word, and merciful above measure, even to those who despise that mercy (like Pharaoh in the text), must punish such rebellion by such of his judgments as to him shall seem most expedient, "the sword, the famine, the noisome beast, or the pestilence?"

Of the first of these calamities, which has been the most usual, we are at present met to deplore and deprecate the effects. The second and last are also but too frequently and naturally the result of war, and often follow close upon its heels. Time will not permit
me

me to demonstrate how these may regularly ensue from the calamity of the sword; how they may happen, and in what manner, it is but too probable, they must speedily happen in a neighbouring country (whose folly and madness, in denouncing an enmity with all the world, can only be equalled with their daring impiety), cannot be a difficulty to any reflecting mind, as the consequence of that anarchy and confusion which the wickedness of its usurping rulers has occasioned.

From the many surprising incidents which are continually arising in the great occurrences of the present times, especially those which have any relation to the awful scenes of war and devastation, all conjecture respecting their termination must be vain and presumptuous. After admitting, which has been sufficiently manifested and explained in this discourse, that the Almighty must, and assuredly will, punish the

the authors of such alarming and horrid transactions, as have lately occurred, we must patiently wait the events of time, and, with serious and awful submission to that divine Being, whose providence extends to the great revolutions of states and nations, and is particularly concerned in rewarding the dutiful and punishing the rebellious, let us anxiously endeavour to secure his favour and protection in the exercises of obedience to his just commands.

Let it, then, be the principal resolution and effect of our assembling here in so public a manner at this time, to glorify God for his numerous blessings and favours to us. May we be induced to live in a constant and habitual submission to the precepts delivered in holy scripture, for our direction and rule of conduct! Let us, by a holy, just, and virtuous life, do honour to God, and magnify his name unto the ends of the earth; and with these happy and comfortable

fortable sentiments, let us beg a blessing on our arms, and implore the protection and support of that Almighty Being, who rewards the virtuous and punishes the vicious, and dispenseth to "every man according to his works."



FINIS.